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# THE EVOLUTION OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE

## AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CIVILIZATION

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## AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CIVILIZATION

BY

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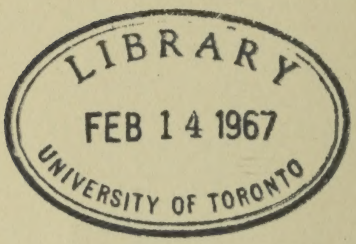


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TO

MARGARET LEWIS BAILEY

BEST OF FRIENDS

KEENEST OF CRITICS

# PREFACE

THIS book is the result of several years of teaching sophomores who come to college with no adequate conception of what the Bible stands for. It is designed for beginners, to help them get their bearings. It attempts to relate Bible study to the great fields of knowledge that command a modern student's attention, to show something of the fascination of Bible study pursued in this way, and to leave a positive conviction of the surpassing value of the great prophetic thoughts handed down to us. If it serves to arouse interest and stimulate further study it will have accomplished its purpose.

I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness for helpful criticism to Dr. Frank K. Sanders, to Professor Charles F. Kent, and to Mr. Henry A. Sherman.

LAURA H. WILD.

June 25, 1917.

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# INTRODUCTION

It was not so very many years ago that the word evolution was occasioning much discussion, especially in the circles of Bible students. Violent opposition was aroused to the idea. Bible teaching was supposed to be overthrown if the thought of evolution was accepted. All that has passed away, at least among intelligent people. Evolution is an accepted fact not only biologically but in a much wider sense than its original meaning seemed to signify. Men are applying it to every branch of knowledge. When one approaches any subject of investigation the immediate presupposition is that the present is evolved out of the past. Moreover, the future is wrapped up in the present. Whatever the future is to be in any line of work or life depends upon what the present holds. Upon no branch of knowledge has this idea thrown greater illumination than upon history. History is simply the unfolding of this evolutionary process; it is the story of the evolution of races and nations. And at no point in the study of history has this idea been more enlightening than at the point of Bible history. Thus the meaning of the Bible itself has become so much more significant that within the last few years the Bible has become a new book, and to-day the desire to approach it from the modern point of view is manifest not simply among scholars but in churches and Bible schools, in literary clubs, and among people at large.

If Hebrew history were the mere history of an ancient race it would, indeed, be interesting when approached from this standpoint. Where did Abraham come from? Why did he leave his native land? How did he become the father of a nation? All are questions doubly fascinating to any eager student of history. The evolution of any ancient race, as, for example, the Cretans or the Hittites, is a problem affording keenest pleasure to any historically trained mind of the present

day. But it would hardly be reasonable to suppose that Hebrew history viewed thus would be of any especially vital interest to the layman. And many a layman has asked himself honestly why he should care particularly about what Abraham or Moses or David did when the thing that interests him is society as he finds it.

The modern Bible student can answer such a question, not apologetically by trying to defend the Bible as a holy book, but enthusiastically as having a vital connection with modern social ideals. Society to-day, our own community life that affords the possibilities for living as we do live in a civilized land, is the product of the past. We are debtors to many sources for the influences that have made our communities what they are. Not the least of these is the influence that has come from the social and spiritual ideals of the Hebrew people. The Bible is the source book we study to show the development of such conceptions. To try to discover whether we have really seen them clearly and grasped their import for our own future is an interesting study quite worthy of a busy person's spare time.

We no longer read the Bible simply because we are told it is a holy book. It must prove itself to be holy to us, because by its grip upon the ideals of our own souls it draws out our reverence and enlarges those very ideals. In other words, it must appeal to us, it must establish its right to be called sacred; and it inevitably *is* sacred when it touches and inspires the best there is in us. Thus the word sacred as applied to the Bible has gradually changed in the content of its meaning. It is sacred because it is the record of a vital current that has sanctified and uplifted civilization and opened up a pathway toward ethical and spiritual possibilities.

We have been opening our eyes to this very slowly since the Reformation, but we have hardly yet grasped it from the largest point of view, the racial point of view. That the teachings of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, could sanctify the individual and help him through life, could even bless a local community and make it a desirable place in which to

live, has been accepted more or less. But that the Bible reveals great vital currents of life and thought evolved in the history of a race, the acceptance or the rejection of which means the hindrance or the progress, the life or the death of the race as a race, has been very faintly apprehended. Otherwise we never could have had such a wholesale disregard of biblical teachings as the present awful international war has exhibited. If out of this war we learn the lesson that the Bible has an international message and not simply one of local and individual import, we shall have learned something worth while and the Bible will become more sacred than ever before. It will no longer be considered a mere talisman for the safety of the individual but as a great source book of social, political, and national, nay even international, ideals. And these spiritualized national concepts will affect our intellectual outlook.

So many different streams of thought have been pouring in upon us of the Occidental world to make us what we are that the result is at present rather confusing. The New World has been swayed this way or that, quite impulsively or blindly, not very thoughtfully, not taking account of the springs from whence these currents of influence have started, not considering whether our impulses were prompted by our pagan or our Christian ancestry, whether they were on the lower plane of primitive, more or less barbaric instincts or on the higher plane of spiritual insight. But it is the part of common sense for us to weigh carefully the import and the worth of such conflicting ideas. In order to do that we must carry them back to their sources and discover through what kind of a life these ideas have evolved and toward what sort of a goal they are pointing. Such racial contributions are made vital to us only as we see them in the process of their evolution. Thus we are able to discriminate crude beginnings from mature conceptions and the whole as a great deposit of human life from which the roots of our modern civilization are drawing their life-giving sap.

The Bible viewed as the source book of one nation's contribution ceases to be a fetich or an oracle whose utterances

are to be slavishly followed. It is a guide-book because it marks danger spots and points toward ideals. The Bible is of tremendous importance to-day because its social programme, touching directly upon political, national, and international policies, is not a cut-and-dried effort of some particular person's brain superimposed upon society, but the gradual working out, through the terrible birth pangs of racial development, of vital racial truths. Even the teachings of Jesus himself can only be seen in their right perspective when viewed as the climax of the evolution of the life of a whole people. That people perished as a nation but their teachings have survived for the benefit of the world.

Thus the study of Hebrew history means more than the study of the history of an ancient race because it has had a place in permanent thinking and life, a unique place which must be reckoned with in trying to steer our course to-day on the uncharted seas of world internationalism. It is from such a point of view that this book attempts to approach the teachings of the Bible.

# *PART I*

# THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF HEBREW LIFE

# CHAPTER I

## HOW ANCIENT HISTORY HAS BEEN REDISCOVERED

**The Fascination of Discovery.** There is an irresistible passion for discovery in the human breast. Life is teeming with interesting quests, making the lure of the trail so strong that youth cannot resist its attractions and even old age gives it up with reluctance. But discovery does not concern itself entirely with new inventions and wonders ne'er heard of on sea or land. There is a discovery of the past quite as fascinating as exploration into the future, and in one sense even more alluring, for the past holds completed work, ideas fully wrought out, while the best we can do in prying into the future is to get something started, crude and imperfect at first, to bear fruit later. By going back along the trail of dim tradition men have been led into marvellous fairy-lands where they have discovered civilizations rivalling our own, even surpassing us in many respects. To discover this real world of the past becomes the irresistible desire of the archæologist; the attraction of the "find" he expects to make when the next mound is laid open by the spade is constantly luring him on. It is like prospecting for gold in the Rocky Mountains. An old prospector never gives up. He has once seen the glitter of the precious metal; he will see it again, he thinks, in the next vein of rock, and he stakes his claim confidently and digs perseveringly. Rewarded beyond expectations or disappointed innumerable times, he only goes on and on with the true gold-seeker's fever. Not less of a compelling power does the archæologist feel when once the fever of discovery has gripped him as he stands over the very places where men of thousands of years ago walked and talked and wrought out their schemes for the future.

One of the first lessons that history teaches us is our indebtedness to the past. The fascination of ancient history is due

to the fact that the world has not always been as it is now, that the part of the world upon which we may even now be standing did not always present the same picture, and that many ancient civilizations, so different from ours and yet with so many striking similarities, helped to produce the world we so calmly take for granted to-day. The true historian, however, does not regard the present simply in the light of the immediate past, but with the help of long-distance views as well, so that such modern history as that of Rome and Greece falls into its proper niche away down the scale, comparatively near to our own day. This rearrangement of our historical perspective the archæologist has accomplished. Many scholars have been at work digging up layer after layer of historical fact. It has not all been done chronologically, one stratum at a time, but in whatever country an archæologist's interest centred, there he has dug away and unearthed the story of one civilization after another. Sufficient time has now elapsed to see quite clearly the general relationship of all these discoveries, and thus the entire early background of the ancient history which has affected our own civilization to any marked degree has been filled in and enriched.

**Following the Trail of the Archæologist.** But the history which we may learn need not be our only share in these researches. We may share the pleasure of the discoverer as well. If we may not ourselves blaze the trail of discovery and make original archæological finds, we may follow some trail already blazed and feel in imagination much of the excitement of the discoverer. One of the earlier adventurers was interested in the well-known classic myths of Greece. The clues he began to follow have finally, in recent years and under other leaders, shed light upon Old Testament history. More recently an expedition of discovery was launched not far from Greece in Asia Minor. This captain's log-book fits in with the writings of the Bible, and it is interesting to observe how fields primarily investigated for other purposes have shed light sooner or later upon biblical history. Egypt has been one of the most fruitful fields of abiding interest to the student of ancient history.

Babylonia is the country which contains some of the earliest strata of civilization but a more recent archæological field. Between Egypt and Babylonia lies Palestine, the home of the Bible, and all three of these countries are closely connected with its early history. Behind the historic data that has been unearthed in any of these lands there lies a prehistoric era. It is called the era of troglodytes or cavemen, the discovery of the remains of which is making it possible for the modern scholar to see the whole history of mankind as a panorama. In sharing the pleasures of the historical discoverer we shall, therefore, take a swift journey around the Mediterranean Sea and down the Euphrates River and then a rapid glance over whole continents to look at the ancient cavemen.

**Dr. Schliemann and Ancient Troy.** Of course, the archæologist must possess the scientist's curiosity. He must be eager to know what secrets the earth holds. He must have faith in the clues he gets and power to arouse the enthusiasm of his workmen. But his eagerness for the undertaking may not appear all at once; it is a love that grows. The flame may be very slight at first, but as it is fanned by little finds it grows to be a consuming passion. Indeed, some may be born archæologists, like the famous Dr. Schliemann (1822–1890), the noted discoverer of old Greek days. When he was a boy his father gave him a *Universal History*. In it was an engraving of Troy in flames. "If the walls were as thick as those in the picture," said the boy, "there must be some remains of them; and I shall excavate them some day." He heard that the old Roman city of Pompeii had been uncovered and the life of the people laid bare, showing them as they were going about their daily duties more than eighteen hundred years ago, when the terrible disaster struck them. This fired his soul to attempt the discovery of the old Greek city of Troy. He began to dig on the mythical site described by Homer in the northwest corner of Asia Minor, south of the Hellespont. Up to this time the tale had been considered purely imaginary, but Dr. Schliemann proved that it was founded upon fact, that there had been a real city of Troy.

**Old Mycenæ.** For twenty years Dr. Schliemann continued digging, unearthing treasures in many places. Mycenæ, in Greece, attracted his attention, and by degrees his efforts revealed a whole ancient civilization of the greatest importance for the understanding of the development of Greek life. His house at Athens was filled with wagon-loads of relics. Imagine his excitement at the opening of a tomb at Mycenæ on finding the body of a man who lived thousands of years ago with a crown bound around his head, or on finding in another tomb heavy golden bracelets and in another golden masks over the faces of the bodies.

**Crete and the Empire of the Sea Kings.** But Mycenæ was only the beginning of the discoveries of ancient Greek life. What had always been considered mere legend in Homer's poems is proved now to have a basis in real history, for over on the island of Crete the palace of the mythical King Minos has been found and within it a beehive chamber which may have been the famous Labyrinth of Homer's tale, where the daring Theseus could find his way out only by means of a thread. Numerous relics showing the civilization of that time have been unearthed. Crete is one of the most recent and exciting of archæological fields. One day the excavators found the king's gaming-board. It is over a yard in length and more than half a yard broad. Its framework is of ivory overlaid with gold plate and covered on top with a mosaic of strips and disks made of rock crystal. Its back is of silver and blue enamel paste, and around its margin runs a border of marguerites with bosses of rock crystal. There are reliefs of nautilus shells, medallions of crystal, and ornaments of gold-plated ivory. Its dazzling show of gold and silver, ivory and crystal, is indescribable. Imagine the king of Crete some four thousand years ago sitting down with one of his courtiers at this glittering game-board for a game something like our game of chess. We can now tell also how the ladies looked, for there are frescoes of them on the walls of the palace, in very low-necked dresses with puffed sleeves, slender, wasplike waists, and flounced skirts. Their hair is elaborately dressed and

curled, and they present altogether quite a Parisian appearance. In another place in the great building there was found a whole carpenter's kit just where the workman had dropped it. It contained saws, chisels, awls, nails, files, and axes. And because these are of bronze material, this period of Greek civilization is known to belong to the Bronze Age. These wonderful remains of a former civilization, which have been found lying just a few feet below the surface of the earth, have revealed a Cretan kingdom of long ago to which has been given the name of the Empire of the Sea Kings, or the Minoan Kingdom, for the name Minos is supposed to be a generic name for a whole family of kings, like the word Pharaoh in Egypt.

**Connection of Bible Stories and Pre-Greek History.** This Cretan or Minoan civilization is considered by some scholars to be the most highly developed and modern of all the ancient world, and it affected to some extent the life in Palestine. The last of the Minoans appear to have been the Philistine tribe of which we hear so much in the Bible. In Crete they were called the Peleset tribe. The attractiveness of the Coast Plain on the eastern shore of the great sea had perhaps first lured their traders over there to establish commercial relations with the Canaanites; or perhaps they had been scattered by an invasion of Crete. At any rate, they established five independent cities on the coast—Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, Ashdod, and Gath.

The biblical account of the Philistine life in these cities indicates the type of civilization they brought with them, a civilization strong and active and well developed in the culture of city life and the arts of war, a great contrast to the neighboring shepherd races. When the wandering tribe of Israelites crossed the Jordan and tried to get possession of the territory lying between it and the sea their most difficult foes were the Philistines, who had no notion whatever of being ousted from their new home and who were skilled in the arts of fighting and of fortification beyond anything the Israelites had ever dreamed of. It was a Philistine, a descendant of the Sea Kings, who stood out in the valley one day, clad in armor and with a

spear in his hand, and defied the armies of Israel. He laughed in derision at the shepherd stripling David who came against him with nothing but a sling. His prototype may be seen upon a Cretan vase dug up by the archæologist, called the Boxer Vase, upon which there is a swaggering warrior clad in bronze armor boasting over the weaker Orientals around him. The Bible story of David and Goliath represents most graphically these two types of civilization that were clashing now in a mighty contest for supremacy. The Israelites had begun to feel the strength and skill of these foreigners and were "dismayed and greatly afraid," the Bible tells us. No wonder there was such great rejoicing when David, with his sling, slew the giant, clad in his coat of mail and his brass helmet and greaves, and that this achievement raised the young David immediately to the highest pinnacle of popular favor. No wonder either that when "the battle went sore against the Israelites" and Jonathan was slain and Saul in his despair killed himself, David sang in his immortal dirge:

> Tell it not in Gath,
> Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
> Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

This struggle of the Israelites lasted several hundreds of years. The stories begin with the time when these degenerate descendants of the Sea Kings captured Samson, the country athlete and hero of the Israelites living in the hill towns near the coast. They brought him to their city of heathen culture, Gaza, and exhibited him for sport in their so-called temple, which was half shrine and half palace. From the balconies above their ladies doubtless looked down in amusement, dressed in the latest Cretan style of frills and flounces, as their ancestresses had looked on years before at a boxing contest or bullfight at the Minoan capital. Like the Cretans, the Philistines had a taste for splendid buildings. The skill of the Cretan goldsmiths is seen among the Philistines when, because of superstitious fear, they sent back the sacred ark of the Israelites filled with golden mice and tumors, for at the old shrine

in Crete they had been accustomed to make votive offerings of the images of animals and diseased human organs.

Thus the very natural connection between the Bible stories and pre-Greek history has been made clear through the recent discoveries of archæologists. And when we remember that the Philistines were not Semites, but of an entirely different race from the Hebrews, this struggle for the little territory between the Jordan and the sea becomes most interesting. It was not merely a fight for land but a struggle for racial supremacy. The Philistines succeeded in handing down to posterity their name for the country, for it is now called Palestine, which is a direct transference of the name Philistine through the Greek Palaistinē and the Roman Palæstina. But that is all that has come down to us from them, a mere name, unless, indeed, the art of writing, formerly supposed to have been transmitted to the Greeks from the Phœnicians, came by way of the Cretans and their descendants. Undoubtedly, they influenced the Israelites in art and architecture, since their civilization had advanced to the Iron Age when the Israelites were still in the Bronze Age.

**Discoveries at Ephesus.** The man who first struck this trail of discovery, which has led on to finds of which he himself never dreamed, we have called a born archæologist. This enthusiasm, however, is not always a gift; it comes sometimes as a result of cultivation. Mr. D. G. Hogarth, who was sent by the British Museum to unearth the great temple to the goddess Diana at Ephesus, has described how, as a young Oxford graduate, he gained, under the leadership of Sir William Ramsay, experience in conducting excavations and how his enthusiasm grew with his knowledge of the work. Sir William Ramsay is a famous Scotch scholar, one of the authorities on Paul's journeys in Asia Minor and one who has done much to make archæology a science.

The temple to Diana, which was to become the scene of Mr. Hogarth's labors, is referred to in the New Testament. Demetrius, a silversmith of Ephesus, became very much disturbed, we are told, at the time of Paul's visit there, for he and his fel-

low tradesmen made silver shrines of Diana which "brought no little business unto the craftsmen." He thought that Paul's preaching of another religion was going to injure his trade, and, as a shrewd tradesman of to-day would do, he tried to avert such disaster by persuading the people that "not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." In 1874 the pavement of this temple had been unearthed.

The discovery of this temple and the Great Altar where was worshipped that Diana who received the homage of the whole cultured world of Paul's time is of great interest to the student of New Testament history. It was not, however, until 1904 that the British Museum decided to prosecute the work further and sent Mr. Hogarth to conduct the investigations. Under Dr. Ramsay he had learned that archæological research includes all sorts of things, such as seeking material, copying inscriptions, noting characteristics of the finds made, measuring land and building spaces, mapping and photographing territory. It includes also knowledge of workmen and skill in managing them, for unless the diggers have enthusiasm they are likely to find little, to smash into bits what they do find, or to be generally lackadaisical in their work. Some of them, too, must be assiduously watched lest they carry away or conceal something they think is especially valuable or tell wrong stories about where they found certain objects. All this oversight takes keenness and experience and the eagerness which makes a real archæologist, for the rewards are "according to the measure of your caring."

It was with great enthusiasm that Mr. Hogarth went to work on the floor of the temple at Ephesus. He hired a hundred men, as well as mule-carts, horse-carts, asses with panniers and asses with sacks, wheelbarrows, and close-woven baskets carried by boys. There were a half-dozen different races, all jabbering together and working in the pit with pick, shovel, or knife. For weeks they kept at it, turning up nothing of

great importance, only broken fragments or trifles of various sorts, until they were almost discouraged. But they had got down to the pavement itself and must dig a hole through the masonry if they went farther. What would they find underneath? While they were wondering, they came upon the Great Altar previously discovered, which was the centre of the Diana worship. Upon examining it they found an outer shell of marble filled in solid with small limestone slabs. It was easier to remove these and thus get through the floor than to make a hole through the solid pavement. After the first slabs were removed they began to see bright flakes of leaf gold, which had evidently fallen from some gilded object. Then a plate of gold turned up and Mr. Hogarth's imagination began to work. These must have come from the ornaments the goddess wore. He sent for sieves and the excitement began. Every handful of the material was washed out. They found earrings of all patterns, beads from necklaces, pins for the hair, brooches for the shoulder and throat, some of them of very fine Ionian work, and many coins. Soon they had a half-thousand jewels, and then the winter rains began. In the spring they used an engine and pump to get the water out and continued their search. As many more jewels were found, with statuettes made of ivory, bronze, terra-cotta, and wood, confirming the account in the book of Acts of the trade of Ephesian craftsmen. There were gold, electron, and silver fragments and amber objects, in all not less than three thousand treasures. This was one year's reward for the discoverer of the ancient past.

**Finds in Egypt.** The science of archæology is the only absolute test of history. Tradition may have become falsified in the process of transmission and records may have been forged, but an inscription on a monument tells the truth, and the actual houses and human bodies of kings and queens, with their ornaments and furniture, reveal the real picture of the civilization of ancient times. Imagine, then, the satisfaction experienced by a historian working down in Egypt when he found, upon opening a tomb, that the dead man's bow and arrows had been placed upon his coffin lid. The bowstring

was snapped and the plumes were in dust, but there was his stout staff and his boomerang. Miniatures of little Nile boats all fully manned were propped up by his side and little wooden servants to answer his bidding in the underworld. There stood his effigy and that of his wife, for this was the custom of burial in those ancient days. You may look into graves six thousand years old in Egypt; you may see pictures on the walls of pyramids and temples that tell the story of life five thousand years ago. There is the oldest known picture of a sea-going ship and the oldest representation of ploughing and sowing and milking. It is quite apparent that the nature of cows has not changed in all these centuries, for this one's hind legs are tied to prevent her kicking over the milk. In the kings' tombs have been found royal furniture, chairs covered with gold and silver and one with a soft leather cushion, jewel-boxes also, and even a king's chariot with the gloves he wore when driving. The discoveries in the tomb of Amenhotep II, who lived about 1500 B.C., show him to have been especially fond of pets, for there, buried with him, are mummified monkeys and a dog. This king boasted that no one could bend his bow but himself, and beside him as he lay in state was found his bow. Another instance of the great regard of the Egyptians for animals came to light when the excavators, upon opening a large vase, found the mummified remains of seventy-three cats. Queen Tyi, one of the two very remarkable queens of Egypt, had her elaborate gold necklace placed in her grave. When the tomb of her parents was opened a room resembling a perfectly appointed living-room was found. Beautiful chairs and beds were there, and cushions covered with linen, still well preserved. There was also a jar of honey still liquid, with the scent of real honey after three thousand three hundred years! The oldest story-books in the world, with their stirring tales of adventure, have been found written upon papyrus and packed into jars placed in the tombs. We know that the boys of ancient Egyptian times were instructed in arithmetic, for remains of the wax tablets they used for figuring have been found in waste-baskets in some of the schoolrooms that have been uncovered.

We have now seen how interesting a study archæology is and how the discoveries made have shed invaluable light upon ancient history, how they have many times proved to be fact what had long been supposed to be myth, and how the certainty of sight, the sight of the houses occupied and actual utensils used, has enabled historians to reconstruct the background of ancient history. We have also seen that the labors of archæological scholars in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea have often shed light upon the history recorded in the Bible, for the stage upon which the scenes of biblical history were enacted included the known world of the time. Much of this light has been side-light. The main interest of the archæologist was not biblical history but Greek or Egyptian history. However, there has been much direct light. Biblical scholars have been aroused to the great importance of this branch of knowledge. If the student of classic Homer, the Bible of the Greeks, rejoices jubilantly over the establishment as an historical fact of an episode previously regarded as a myth, how much more does the student of the Bible of the whole Christian world rejoice, when reading his sacred book, to find firm ground under his feet!

# CHAPTER II

## THE OLDER BACKGROUND OF HEBREW LIFE AS REVEALED BY THE ARCHÆOLOGIST

The Old Testament has very much to say about Egypt. The nearness of this land to Palestine and the attractiveness of its fertile fields are mentioned in Genesis. Throughout the Bible it is quite apparent that Egypt exerted a great influence upon the Hebrews. Has anything been found there to corroborate these statements?

Several important discoveries have been made concerning the Israelites and their slavery in Egypt. One city, Pithom, has shown that its walls were made of two kinds of bricks, with straw and without, testifying to the truthfulness of that severe edict of the Pharaoh given in the book of Exodus concerning the treatment of his Hebrew slaves. The names Jacob and Joseph were found inscribed upon other walls. Earlier history than this, however, has been revealed. Palestine always lay close to Egypt. It was not an isolated strip of land. On the contrary, it was an international highway, much coveted by the great powers of the day. The preparation of the land of Palestine to be the home of the Hebrew race, when it should appear in the fulness of time, was going on for centuries. This process is plainly spread out before us in a most valuable series of letters discovered in Egypt in 1888. These letters are called the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. Tel means city and the tablets were found in the city of Amarna. A woman happened to be digging up the earth on that old site, to get some top dressing for her garden, when she came upon these clay tablets with inscriptions on them. She suspected they might be of value and took them to a dealer, who gave her fifty cents for them. He tried to get archæologists to buy them; but they were refused by two as fakes. Many of the tablets became broken

into bits by being carried in sacks from place to place. Finally, however, scholars woke up to their immense value, and the museums at Cairo and Berlin and the British Museum acquired most of them. They tell of the relation between Palestine and Egypt in the fourteenth century B.C., of how the Egyptian Pharoah had petty princes in the various cities of Palestine. These princes were obliged to pay tribute and make reports to the Pharaoh, and these tablets are their reports. They show a very subservient attitude, for the princes knew that if they did not please their sovereign he would treat them as he treated three of their number, as is shown by one of the pictures on an Egyptian temple, which represents an Egyptian ship sailing home with three heads dangling from the prow. These tablets have an additional value because they are written in the Babylonian cuneiform instead of the Egyptian hieroglyphic or script, thus showing that all these nations were closely enough connected at this time to have an international language for official communications.

This was before the heartrending experiences of the Hebrews, who were first treated cordially when they wandered down to the edge of Egypt in time of famine and were later subjected to such abject and tyrannical slavery. The name of the Pharaoh who was ruling when Moses helped them to make their escape across the northern arm of the Red Sea was probably Merneptah or his immediate successor. Imagine the excitement of the scholars when they discovered Merneptah's mummy! The moment of the unwrapping of this body was thrilling, indeed, to the archæologists present. What would he look like? The unveiling of a grandfather's portrait which we had never seen would not be half so interesting. When the face was finally uncovered it showed a king, high-bred and aristocratic, with an aquiline nose and a strong, determined jaw. But all his determination did not prevent Moses and the tribe of Israelites from escaping out of Egypt.

**Light on Religious Beliefs.** This uncovering of ancient life has also thrown much light upon religious beliefs and more is constantly appearing. Mr. Flinders Petrie, the great English

archæologist, spent much time in the mining regions at the southern extremity of the Sinaitic peninsula. There in earliest days the Egyptians sent their men for copper and other precious metals and stones. Mr. Petrie discovered sacred caves near these mines. The divinity of the region was called the "Mistress of Turquoise." To her the miners would sacrifice, and then they would go into the caves to sleep in the belief that their dreams would guide them to the precious stones. This practice shows how people in their superstition depended on dreams in those ancient days. In excavating the old site of Gezer, in Palestine, one city after another was laid bare, until rough hand-made pottery was uncovered dating back as early as the cavemen of about 3000 B.C. And here, under the foundation of a house in one of the cities, were found the bones of a boy and a girl evidently sacrificed when the house was founded, as we know to have been the custom of many barbaric tribes in Africa, Borneo, Oceana, India, and Mexico, as well as in Palestine, before civilized days. The same thing was found at the mound of Megiddo, farther north, only this time it was a girl of about fifteen. This discovery throws light upon the temptation that came to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, for it was the common custom of the heathen tribes about him. But the story tells us that God showed Abraham a better way, and the realization of this better way marks a great step in the evolution of religion.

**Babylonian Finds.** Two of the greatest discoveries were tablets in Babylonia upon which are written the Babylonian version of our Creation and Flood stories. One of the archæologists who had discovered several fragments of these stories made three expeditions, in his eagerness for the work, and finally died of fever contracted on one of his journeys.[1] Among his adventures was one very dangerous trip down the Euphrates River on a raft made of skins inflated over a frame of rough logs. Imagine his delight when at one time he found a fragment of the old Creation poem which fitted in exactly with the others that had been discovered.

[1] George Smith.

The territory covered by the old empires of Babylonia and Assyria is full of finds. In opening one of the many mounds along the banks of the Tigris an excavator uncovered the city of Nineveh and one of the most beautiful palaces of antiquity, the palace of King Sennacherib, the Sennacherib of Isaiah's time. The imagination of scholars has helped to restore this, so that we can picture it very much as it was in reality in the eighth century B.C. This archæologist took back to the British Museum a large collection of stone images, giant-winged, human-headed bulls, and lions and eagle-headed deities.[1]

**Finding the Behistun Tablet, the Key to the Babylonian Language.** The man who opened up these Babylonian and Assyrian treasures was a young English army officer, Henry C. Rawlinson by name, who had been sent to Persia. Riding one day on his duties in the Zagros Mountains, he passed a cliff which attracted his attention because he saw that the face of it high up was hewn off and that there were pictures on the polished rock with some sort of writing below. Coming closer to examine it, he found, three hundred and fifty feet up from the ground, a bas-relief representing a king before whom stood a long line of captives bound neck to neck with a rope. Beneath it were inscriptions in three languages, which were found later to be the Old Persian, the Babylonian, and an Elamite tongue. There was a narrow ledge fourteen inches wide at the base of these inscriptions. In his first attempt to copy them he climbed up the face of the rock to this ledge, upon which a ladder could be held for his farther ascent. Later he employed the more practical means of a swing hung in front of the writing. After working ten years at these languages, with the names of Darius, Xerxes, and Hystaspes, which could be readily made out, as a clue to the rest, scholars produced a translation. Previous to this time no one had been able to read the ancient Babylonian cuneiform writing. But here was a key, and with great eagerness Rawlinson sent the word to England, and all the world of scholars rejoiced in this priceless discovery, which has made it possible to read the

[1] Sir A. H. Layard.

many cuneiform inscriptions. It caused excitement like that occasioned by the finding of the Rosetta Stone in Egypt in 1799, the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The deciphering of this language, however, took nearly four times as long as that of the Behistun tablet described above, which Rawlinson discovered in 1835. The ability to read the Babylonian cuneiform writing has enabled scholars to reconstruct the entire Babylonian background of Hebrew history.

**Hittite Pictographs.** Another set of ancient inscriptions remains to be translated. As yet no key has been found to the Hittite language inscribed on rocks in the centre of Asia Minor. The Hittites are a people we hear of, incidentally, many times in the Bible. They were a strong race who came down from the north, conquering as they came. At one time they overran Palestine and went as far as Egypt. These pictographs on the rocks in Asia Minor show very well what kind of people they must have been, with their warm, high caps for cold weather, similar to our toboggan caps, tunics coming to the knees, and shoes turning up at the toes somewhat like our snow-shoes. They have receding foreheads, large noses, marked cheek-bones, and protruding upper jaws. The Hittite capital, Hatti, discovered in northern Cappadocia,[1] has been called "a place of wonders." We feel sure these people must have been cleaner than some Orientals, for in one corner of the palace a great stone bath-tub has been found. The women evidently had much to do with politics, to judge from a letter from the wife of the Egyptian Pharaoh to the Hittite queen. The one thing lacking as yet to unravel the mysteries concerning this interesting race is a key to their language, like the key to the cuneiform or to the Egyptian hieroglyphics. They still remain to be translated, as do also the Cretan tablets which would tell of that interesting pre-Greek history.

**Discoveries in Palestine.** Among interesting discoveries made in or near Palestine is a mosaic map of the ancient world constructed in the earth on the east side of the Jordan. This map originally represented the animals and plants of the vari-

[1] This place is now a Turkish village called Boghaz-Keui.

ous regions. Not much is left of them now but legs and tails and broken trunks. When the site of Jericho, on the west side of the river, was being excavated, household articles, such as a lamp or a corn-mill, were turned up, showing the degree of civilization the old city had attained. At Bethshemesh the diggers stumbled upon a fortified gate. In Jerusalem, in the aqueduct leading from the pool of Siloam to the city, one of the oldest known Hebrew inscriptions of any length may be read, describing how the workmen approached each other from different sides and heard each other's voices as the tunnel was almost bored through. Following is a translation:

> The boring. And this was the matter of the boring. When yet the hewers were lifting the pick, each toward his fellow, and when yet there were three cubits to be bored, the voice of each was heard calling to his fellow; for there was a fissure from south even to north. And on the day of the boring, the hewers struck, each to meet his fellow pick against pick; then went the waters from the issue to the pool for two hundred and a thousand cubits, and a hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the hewers.

Many scholars think this inscription was written there by King Hezekiah about 700 B.C. when he built the aqueduct. At Taanach, in the Plain of Esdraelon, eight clay figures of the goddess Astarte were found, with the complete jewelry outfit of a woman—a gold pin, eight gold rings, two silver rings, two bronze bracelets, a silver bangle, three small crystal cylinders used as charms or for divining the future, five pearls, and two scarabs, one of amethyst and one of crystal. This collection of relics represents the worship and adornments of the people of that city between 1000 and 600 B.C. In this same plain is Megiddo, one of the battle centres of the ancient world. So familiar was this region to all the inhabitants of Palestine as the place for armies to gather that the author of the book of Revelation took it to represent the battle-field where Good and Evil should have their final struggle, calling it Har-Magedon, "Mountain of Magedon." [1] Here at Megiddo the excavators

[1] Rev. 16 : 16.

dug up seven cities, finding them one beneath another, and disclosed remains of the massive stone work which King Solomon had constructed as a fortification to his realm.

At the old mound of Gezer, already mentioned, more than half-way down the Coast Plain, are similar fortification stones of this same era. One day a basket-girl, employed to carry away the dirt which the diggers shovelled loose, discovered a Greek inscription on a stone. Translated, it read: "May fire pursue Simon's palace." Simon was one of the Jewish kings of Maccabean times, about eight hundred years after Solomon, who drove the Syrians out of that region. Some Syrian workman evidently thought that he would get revenge upon Simon by writing a curse on the very foundation-stone of his house! At Lachish, one of the last cities on the southern border on the way down to Egypt, eleven cities were found one on top of another. This is called the "Mound of Many Cities." They range from 1700 to 400 B.C., each one of them containing remains of its own kind of implements and ware and language. It is by reading the age of these objects and inscriptions that the age of the city can be determined.

**Relics of Cavemen.** But discoveries of far more ancient times than these have men made when they have examined the old caves of which Palestine is especially full. Some of them date back to the days of the cavemen. They range all the way from the simplest holes in the ground, eight to ten feet square, to apartments of from five to twenty rooms, and even one of sixty. The cave-dwellers of Gezer were the earliest ones known to have lived in Palestine. They belong to the Stone Age, since there was no sign of metal in any of their implements. There were flint knives and scrapers, millstones, a few articles made of bone, spindle whorls, which were the forerunners of the spinning-wheel, made something like a top, and rude pottery. In one cave there were found some very primitive drawings of cows and other animals. From the low roofs of these caves and the shape of the few remains of skulls and bones found there it is thought that these cavemen were a small race. Farther south there was a taller tribe that came

later, their descendants being so tall as to be considered giants. The caves they occupied were much larger. Here were found many spacious chambers communicating by narrow passages. One room measured four hundred feet in length and eighty in height. Some thirty miles directly south of Gezer is the centre of this latter cave district at the village called to-day Beit Jibrin, translated "the House of Gabriel." Here is a curious instance of the way names become confused and garbled as they are handed down. In the early Christian era the name of this place was Baitogabra, which does not mean "House of Gabriel" at all, but is in all likelihood a corruption of the ancient Hebrew name Bêth-ha-gibbôrîm, meaning "House of Mighty Men," so much in awe did the Hebrews stand of the descendants of this tall, giant-like race. Their original ancestors appear to have lived at the beginning of the Bronze Age, for they evidently had metal tools to use, as is shown by the pick-marks on the walls of the caves.

To understand the significance of the cavemen in Palestine it is necessary to realize how great a part they played in the beginnings of history all over the world. The story which the cavemen, or troglodytes, tell is also most intimately related to the geologic changes which have occurred over the earth's surface. Thus the geologist has helped the archæologist in determining the long extent of time during which our ancestors were experimenting with the forces of nature and finding out for the first time the simplest every-day facts of our present life, such as the use of fire to cook his food and of skins to clothe his body. All over the world prehistoric days are being reconstructed by the things men have found in caves. Rubbish forty feet deep has been dug away from cavern floors, and in it have appeared implements of every age and kind—bone, ivory, reindeer horn, flint; pins, needles, spoons, ladles, spear-points of ivory as well as of flint. In one cave a bone whistle was found.

Some of these cavemen, especially in Spain and France, knew how to draw very good pictures on their walls. In some places they even colored them. One of the primitive spinning-

wheels mentioned above was found in the Swiss lake region, a possession of a person living there some ten thousand years ago. Stone fist hatchets have been discovered which date back fifty thousand years. The very rudest of flint instruments have been found in Belgium and England, in Burma and India, and a very few in America, also dating back to the earliest Stone Age. In shell-heaps on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts have been found traces of the handiwork of a people who lived there long before the Indians. These shell-heaps, or kitchen-middens, are the heaps of refuse shells left where the aborigines had temporary dwelling-places when at certain seasons of the year they gathered the edible shell-fish. A very fruitful study has been that of the cliff-dwellers who came later, living in the valleys of the Rio Grande and the Rio Colorado. In Mexico remarkable remains have been found of figures and temples cut in the living rock. The carved and gilded dart-throwers show wonderful workmanship. South America reveals a whole civilization of very ancient men, indicating that man may have lived here from eight thousand to thirty thousand years ago. They do not, as a rule, extend back as far as do some of the finds in Europe and Asia. It is therefore supposed that the American aborigines found their way here from Asia, perhaps across the Behring Straits, bringing with them some of the knowledge already gained by their paleolithic ancestors.

These paleolithic men were flourishing in Palestine thousands of years before the Hebrews arrived; indeed, many thousands of years before any Semitic people occupied the land. They left some of their rude implements and weapons for us to examine. These are called by the names applied when scholars first discovered in France articles of this period in man's development. Chellean flints is a term meaning flints like those from Chelles, France; Magdalenian implements are those like the simple bone and flint implements from the caves of Madelaine; Mousterian, like the flaked and chopped flints found at Moustier; Acheulian, like those discovered in the very interesting bank at St. Acheul on the Somme. It does not

necessarily mean that the first appearance of cavemen on earth was in France, but that archæologists first stumbled upon their remains in these localities and therefore gave them the name. Just when this very primitive period ceased and gave way to the next period of a little higher advancement is not accurately known. Scholars think it likely that in Palestine the next period of the Stone Age man, the Neolithic, begins about 10000 B.C., and of this age we have a great many remains of all sorts, not only examples of skilful workmanship in making utensils, but ruins of their cave-houses and drawings on the walls representing their life, such as have been mentioned in connection with the excavation of Gezer.

Thus the long, long history of man on earth is being reconstructed by means of the discoveries the archæologists have made. It is a fascinating search, for it reveals the background for our own life and enables us to see our own civilization, with its modern discoveries and inventions, in the right perspective.

# CHAPTER III

## PREHISTORIC MAN AND THE RISE OF THE GREAT RACIAL GROUPS

**Man's Desire to Know.** From his very start man has manifested an eager desire to know, and, as we are now better able to realize than our fathers could, he has had from the beginning a wonderfully varied wealth of material spread out before him to test his venturesome and intrepid spirit. His adventures have been made not only in the discoveries of lands and their possessions, but very largely in earliest times in finding out the great principles which hold the universe together and the no less wonderful spiritual powers which lead men on in their purposes and actions. This was true even of the early cavemen. The spirit of adventure, indeed, has characterized all progress, and while it took those earliest men centuries to discover for themselves what we to-day learn by imitation in a few years of childhood, it was the spirit of the discoverer in them which raised them above their associates, the hippopotamus and the reindeer.

After many thousands of years of slow progress primitive man began to emerge from his half-animal state, showing a mental activity quite unique as he gathered together in groups. Of course, the whole universe as we know it was entirely new and undiscovered to him, and we soon find that the minds of one group were attracted in one direction, those of another group in a different direction, in the common effort to see what could be found out concerning this interesting world and the life they were destined to live.

**His First Adventure.** Of course, men must first venture forth to find food to satisfy their physical hunger, but while they were doing this their minds awakened and a desire to know for the sake of knowing crept in and took possession of

their souls. Consequently, we find a nomad picking up his tent and driving his flocks where he can find better pasture, and soon worshipping the moon that gives him light when he travels in the cool of the night and before long studying the heavens and measuring time by months and seasons. Then he names the constellations and invents an explanation of their movements, and, whether he was right or not according to our scientific knowledge, he became the pioneer in the science of astronomy. Another race is moved to consider especially the fortunes of the dead. They wish to preserve their memory and house their spirits and consequently to build them enduring habitations. Therefore, they set their practical minds to work upon a house large at the base and pointed at the top and made of rock that could never be moved after it was set in place. The pyramids were the result, a marvel to us to-day, revealing a knowledge of mechanics quite surprising for four or five thousand years ago. In this manner the foundations of another science were laid in that remote past and structures erected which are monuments to the original thinking of that particular race.

Thus the science of astronomy and the pyramids remind us of striking manifestations of the spirit of adventure in the early Babylonians and Egyptians. Such striking manifestations found in different groups of people we call racial genius. As time went on and local conditions had more opportunity to make impressions, and succeeding generations were affected by racial inheritance, handing on tendencies and traditions from father to son, these characteristics became more firmly set as a part of the very constitution of a race. We could pass all the way around the world, as men have done in their historical investigations, and find one race after another developing some side of human nature in their adventures after truth and life, not only the Babylonians and the Egyptians, but the Greeks and Romans and Anglo-Saxons and many others as well. We to-day inherit something from them all. They were our forebears in adventure, the pioneers in discovery, and we owe them our admiration and intelligent appreciation. If we

are wise in our own eagerness to know the universe and the life we are destined to live we will seek to understand, in a measure at least, the spirit of these varying races and their original contribution to our own absorbing and fascinating quest.

Ethnologists, who make a specialty of studying the characteristics of the human race, have gone from country to country observing the likenesses and differences of the people and learning about their ancestors. From these scholars we learn of the relationships and the divisions of the various races.

**The First Man.** To find the basis for the history of any race we must find from what group their ancestors sprang and what their particular interests were. In the island of Java there was dug up in 1892 the skull and portions of the skeleton of the first man known to stand erect, the so-called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, with a brain capacity of about one-half that of civilized man to-day. Therefore, in those eastern islands is supposed by some to be "the cradle of the human race."[1] This man probably lived several hundred thousand years ago. Other men began to appear in different spots over the earth. Numerous skulls and bones have been discovered in caves in various localities which show that long before there could have been any civilization, or anything much higher than a mere animal existence, the physical man as we know him began to evolve. Without language, without a knowledge of how to use any of nature's forces such as fire or water, with nothing but hunger to guide him, he was, indeed, a very primitive specimen of mankind. It was thousands of years before he evolved anything which in any way resembled civilized existence. During this period his home was in caves and he gradually learned how to use skins to protect himself against the weather, to make fire to cook his food and keep himself warm, and to construct rude implements for killing game and sewing skins together, and after a while for making a shelter when no cave was at hand. Then he started a language by letting certain

[1] See George A. Barton, *A Sketch of Semitic Origins*, pp. 13 *ff.*, for a brief résumé of the theories concerning the origin of the human race and of the early branch known as the Semitic race; also Henry Osborn, *Men of the Old Stone Age*, for *Pithecanthropus erectus*.

sounds stand for certain actions or objects, and thus ideas grew in his mind.

**The Four Stages of Man's Development.** There are four distinct stages in the long development of man, for it took thousands of years for him to discover enough even to be called civilized at all. He first made use of stone for implements to help him in killing game, fighting, eating, and performing the most necessary acts of life, and therefore this first period is called the Stone Age. Wherever flint implements are found in caves they are considered the relics of this Stone Age. Next, man discovered copper in the earth, and through some happy accident of finding it melted in the fire learned that he could use it for shaping many articles much more usable than his clumsy stone implements. This was the Copper Age. By and by he either found copper mixed with some alloy that makes bronze or else he experimented with combinations until he discovered the process himself, and this was the Bronze Age. Now we are coming to a time of real inventions and artistic skill. The use of bronze was replaced only when man discovered the innumerable things he could do with iron. This was the Iron Age, and here we find man in a well-developed civilization. We are still in the Iron Age, which has gone on developing through the marvellous discoveries of other elements and of powerful agencies such as steam and electricity.

**Paleolithic Man.** The early part of the Stone Age occurred while the earth was passing through some very interesting periods called the Glacial periods. This is the Paleolithic era. Time and again great glaciers covered the land, but in the interval between these frozen eras, when the ice had receded, man had a chance to develop. Some of these Inter-Glacial periods were warmer than others, and the development was not even over the world, but one characteristic was generally true everywhere: man lived in caves, and, accordingly, these early Stone Age people are called cavemen. Specimens of their artistic skill have been preserved in the drawings on the cave walls. Some of them are quite remarkable, so realistically are animals like the reindeer and the bison represented.

One remarkable drawing represents an eel or a serpent between two fishes, with two horses' heads, and between them the earliest known drawing of a man, brandishing a spear.

The last Ice Age passed away in Europe some eight or ten thousand years before Christ. By that time the appearance of the earth, as well as the flora and fauna found upon it and the climate of the various parts, had become much as it is to-day. At some time previous to this the continents are supposed to have been more closely connected than now; for example, a continuous stretch of land is supposed to have connected India with South Africa across what is now the Indian Ocean. Europe also had land stretching across the Mediterranean Sea to Africa. England is supposed to have been a part of the mainland of Europe, for the remains of submerged forests are found between. There is evidence of a vanished continent in the Atlantic Ocean. North America very likely was more closely united, through Behring Straits, with Asia than it is now. Animals could thus get across from continent to continent. Indeed, it is believed that there were various periods of land elevation and submergence. But by 10000 B.C. the land and water were arranged much as they are now and the distribution of animals was very much like the present. The last reindeer had disappeared to the northern regions and a different kind of man presents himself. This is the second part of the Stone Age. It is called the Neolithic Age, to distinguish it from the first part, or Paleolithic Age. These words are derived from the Greek language and simply mean New and Old Stone.

**Neolithic Man.** Neolithic man seems to have forgotten much of the artistic skill in drawing possessed by the highest type of his Paleolithic ancestors. But his weapons and implements were exquisitely fashioned and beautifully polished. Especially interesting remains of him have been found in the Nile Valley, but wherever they are found they bring to light some peculiarity of that far-off time. One of these is his invention of circular and spiral drawing, which was doubtless the origin of later spiral ornamentation. Another is his peculiar

custom of burial. A mummy of one of these men was discovered in a sarcophagus in Egypt and brought to the British Museum. There he lies on his side with his knees drawn up to his chin. The sight of him inspired Andrew Lang to write the following verse to Neolithic man:

> He buried his dead with his toes
> Tucked up: a peculiar plan;
> Till his knees came right under his nose:
> 'Twas the method of primitive man.

**Varied Development in Different Localities.** This Neolithic man soon progressed from the hunting stage of his Paleolithic ancestor and became a herdsman and agriculturist. He learned to tame the horse, the dog, and the cat and to use them as domestic animals. This is the prehistoric era of mankind. All we know about it has come from the discoveries made by geologists and archæologists who have found the remains of cave dwellings, stone implements, and characteristic drawings and have dug up here and there an ancient mummy of that period. They judge that this prehistoric Neolithic Age went back in Egypt at least as far as the year 10000 B.C. It gave place to the Bronze Age, and when history, with its authentic records, begins we find people in Egypt using their stone knives only for religious purposes, as, for example, in slaying an animal for sacrifice. Ordinary implements were now made of more usable material. Thus history proper begins in Egypt in the Bronze Age, about 4000 B.C., and in Babylonia perhaps a few hundred years earlier; that is why this part of the earth is of especial interest to the historian. But while the Egyptians and Babylonians were fast progressing from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age and through the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, in other parts of the world we find men were slower in their development, perhaps not having begun so early. So, while Egypt in her golden age of achievement was enjoying the discoveries of the Iron Age, much of Europe was still in the Bronze Age. There are places in the world to-day where conditions are very adverse, and there man is still but little beyond the

Paleolithic stage. The Esquimaux are considered the nearest representatives of the cavemen of the Ice Ages. The North American Indians remained in the Neolithic stage until they came in contact with civilized peoples. The Mexicans and Peruvians, however, had developed by themselves into the Bronze stage, and there were some tribes of Indians around Lake Superior who had implements made of copper.

Thus, through the long incubating process of thousands of years man as a primitive human being received his start. Primitive man shows considerable thought and originality and skill in adapting the materials at his hand to the uses of subsistence. But by the time real history begins we find he has travelled very much farther than this in his development. History immediately perceives great lines of cleavage between men living in different parts of the earth. How did these separate groups of men become so different from one another in feature and physical bearing, in temperament and mental processes, in speech and ability to express their own peculiar conceptions of the significance of things? Perhaps so large a question cannot be completely answered, but the meaning of history as we find it later in full progress depends upon our observation of these great group differences at the very beginning of the affairs of men.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE GREAT RACIAL GROUPS

**The Four Main Groups of Men.** After human beings had once received their start we find men collecting in groups. They have come a long way from their ancestors of the caves. They have gathered together in certain sections of the earth, where the climate or the abundance of food attracted them. Here they have been influenced by nature herself, the heat or the cold, the ease with which they could supply their needs or the dangers to which they were subject, the monotony or the variety of the landscape upon which they gazed, until the different groups in different localities have become quite different from each other. Both heredity and environment doubtless had much to do in producing the differences found in mankind. For example, in the color of the skin, one group is dark and another light; in the shape of the face, one is round and another long; as to the hair, some are straight-haired, others wavy-haired, and still others woolly-haired; in the spirit shown, one is aggressive and active and another more passive and meditative; and in the language used, one changes its words from the root, necessitating conjugations and declensions, and another simply unites root words with little or no change in form, making an agglutinative or glued-on language.

There are four main groups of men: Negroes, or Black people; Mongols, or Yellow people; Amerinds, or Red or Brown people; Caucasians, or White people.

**Three Groups of Caucasians.** It is with the Caucasians that we have especially to do, for it is in this group that civilization seemed first to get its start and real history to begin. Recent study has revealed three main strands of the white race—the Mediterranean, the Alpine, and the Nordic—based upon fundamental biological characteristics. These character-

istics persist even down to the present day, notwithstanding all the mixture of blood and crossing of types that has occurred during the long centuries since their first appearance. The Mediterranean group comprises the long-headed brunette types that developed first near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The Alpine group consists of the round-headed, dark-eyed, and dark-haired people, short of stature, that originated probably in the highlands of western Asia, spreading westward over the southern part of Europe. The Nordic group is that distinctive type of white man, tall of stature, having a long head, light hair, and blue eyes, that developed remarkable vigor in the colder regions of southern Russia and in Scandinavia and swept down time and again from the north upon the more highly developed southern civilizations. It was the Mediterranean branch that got the earliest start.

The term civilization denotes a certain amount of culture which has been gained when man has used his intellect to such an extent that he is no longer a slave to nature but forces nature to do his bidding. In Africa, between the fertile Nile region and the northern arm of the Red Sea, conditions seem to have been just right for man to take a decided start in the discovery of what nature and life holds for him. He began to harness nature more intelligently to his own needs, and thus northern Africa appears to have been the cradle of civilization.

Ancient history deals with two very important branches of the Mediterranean group of white men, the Hamitic and the Semitic. These two branches of peoples correspond to the sons of Noah called Ham and Shem in the Bible story. That account of the origin of the races, however, parts company at this point with ethnology in disregarding the yellow and black races entirely and in treating as one, under the name of Japheth, the other groups of the white race.

Ancient history also, in its later stages, shows the decided influence of the virile Nordic race as the milder Mediterranean peoples were forced to yield supremacy to their northern invaders. The northern coast lands were especially overwhelmed by their attacks, and the early Cretans and Hellenes were

practically absorbed by the tall, blond, vigorous northerners. Italy, too, was overrun by them. Still earlier, Media had been taken possession of by the Nordic Persians, and the dark Hindu of India had given way before these conquerors. The conquered peoples soon learned the speech of the conquerors, the Aryan language, and therefore all peoples speaking tongues kindred to the Aryan have been called Aryan people. These amalgamated races, including the Hindus, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, and later the Teutons and Russian Slavs, have been called also Indo-Europeans because of the territory over which they spread.[1]

It is quite essential that we understand the characteristics of the three groups, the Hamites, the Semites, and the Indo-Europeans, for they became very different in the course of time and clashed most decidedly in their interests. In their struggle with each other and with nature each evolved certain striking talents or racial genius and gave to the world distinctive contributions. The story of this evolution constitutes ancient history. The historical background of our own life in the Occidental world is found by tracing the struggles, ambitions, and achievements of the Hamites, Semites, and Indo-Europeans in the development of the white race. The red race and the black race, while very interesting to the ethnologist, have not had so much to contribute to the progress of our world. The yellow race, on the other hand, has developed far but in a different way and in another section of the world.

**Hamites and Semites Contrasted.** Within the Hamitic group are included three races of ancient history—the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, and the Libyans. But the Egyptians were not pure Hamites, the Hamitic blood having been mixed more or less with a Semitic strain from Arabia and the East, for there was a very large migration of Semites to Africa. The home of the Semites was Arabia and the region around the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. This group embraces Arabs,

[1] Although this latter term is not absolutely correct from a racial standpoint, we shall use it as referring to those Mediterranean peoples who came under the dominance of the Nordic race, including also the Teutons, who are more purely Nordic.

Babylonians, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Early Canaanites, and Hebrews. Their characteristics were quite different from those of the Hamites. The skin of the Hamite is dark, while the Semite belongs to a lighter-skinned people. The modern descendants of the ancient Egyptians are the peasants, or fellahin, of the Nile district. They have always been an industrious, hard-working, utilitarian race without high ideals. The early Egyptians were devoted to the grosser interests of life, animal enjoyment, and material welfare. Agriculture was their chief pursuit. They preferred the huge in architecture. Their religion was polytheistic, and even their hopes of immortality were inseparable from their conceptions of the present animal life in the body.

In comparison the skin of the Semites, while swarthy from exposure, is really of a fairer type. They are rather tall, and marked beauty may be found among the upper classes. The Semites were the aborigines of Arabia, and the Arab is the best-preserved type to-day, leading the same nomadic life as of old. In the ancient Babylonian language the word "to go home" means "to go to one's tent," which shows the original life the Semites led. Their thoughts had rather a narrow range, but they did some very lofty thinking within that range. In other words, the Semite has been an idealist.

The Indo-Europeans, on the other hand, have decided characteristics, quite different from the more southern races of Hamites and Semites. They are much more alert. The highest bodily symmetry man has ever attained was reached by the Greeks. They had a wonderful sense of artistic form and a marked power for philosophic thinking. The northern branches, or Teutons, have been noted for their clear judgment and dogged persistence, for their independence and aggressiveness. All the Indo-European peoples possess a more varied intellectual range than the Semites have had, but they are less intensive in their thinking.

These are the great divisions of Caucasians, or the white race. Four of the five prominent religions of the world originated with this white race—Christianity, Mohammedanism,

Brahmanism, and Buddhism. Confucianism sprang from the Mongolians. This division of the human race is almost entirely Asiatic and includes the Mongolians, Chinese, Manchus, Japanese, Koreans, Thibetans, Turks, and Tartars. Their characteristics are quite different from those of the white race. They are yellowish in color; they have high cheek-bones, a short, flat nose, small, black, oblique eyes, and coarse, black, straight hair. They seem reserved and apathetic but are, nevertheless, very thrifty and industrious. They have excelled all the world in their artistic achievements in porcelain, bronze-work, and ivory-carving, but are lacking in the highest forms of plastic and pictorial art. It is among the Mongolians that we find the agglutinative and monosyllabic languages; the Hamites, Semites, and Indo-Europeans have all used inflections.

**Another Very Old Race.** Of course, not all of the races in these main groups have been mentioned in this brief sketch. But the most important ones have been accounted for. There are others of great interest, when the whole tale of human history is told, such as the Sumerians, who figured in the very earliest times, a strong people from the mountains of Asia that moved southwest into Babylonia, before the Semites from Arabia came to form the Chaldean race of Bible history.[1] The mingling of various races and tongues at the dawn of history was, perhaps, the occasion for the story of the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel. Certain it is that at the great building operations that went on in the earliest days of Babylon, or Babel, when the kings were building "ancient sky-scrapers," there was more than one strain of racial genius and dialects were absorbed into each other to form the final Babylonian language, which has been preserved to us in the old cuneiform writing.[2]

[1] These Sumerians had some striking characteristics in contrast to the Semites, as shown in the engravings and statuettes they left. Notable among these are their round, shaven heads and faces and woollen petticoats hanging from the waist. Whereas, the Semites wore beards and garments hanging from the shoulder. Their features are very different also. From the remains left of their distinctive civilization it is known that they must have had much originality and a high degree of cultivation for the times.

[2] We know that at one time in the early period there were at least nine languages spoken in the city of Babylon.

**Highest Type of Hamites.** In each great racial group one or two branches seem to have developed the characteristics of its special group to the highest degree and to represent best the racial genius of that division. Among the Hamites this race is the Egyptian, for one of the most interesting and enlightening facts of history is the high degree of civilization to which the earliest Egyptians attained, even away back in the third millennium before Christ. Their knowledge of practical affairs, of mechanics in building, of irrigation in agriculture, their beginnings of the profession of medicine, of mathematical calculations, and of management and system in government, show us a people alert and progressive, adapting themselves readily to their environment and to the demands which society made upon them. But more astonishing than this is their art in their knowledge and use of colors, their designs, and the dignity and magnificence of their conceptions. All this came out in later generations of Egyptians through the largest temples and tombs which the world has ever seen. Moreover, their thinking found expression in a literature which has been preserved to us, largely a religious literature, as is the case with all early civilizations. The Book of the Dead, the handbook for the departed spirit in his travels in the underworld, is a classic. Later generations produced also poetry and an early drama. Their genius was essentially utilitarian, for they were primarily a practical people. To get what would be of use to them, even in the life after death, was the motive which spurred them on to their noblest endeavors. And these endeavors certainly assumed very noble and enduring forms, so that the Egyptians are without question the leading representative of the Hamites.

**Highest Type of Semites.** Among the Semites we have two races which are rivals for first place, the Babylonians and the Hebrews. So far as general civilization is concerned, in the arts of construction, the beginnings of science, skill in warfare, and complexity of culture, the Babylonians, having absorbed the culture of the Sumerians, hold the supremacy. Very early indeed, as early as the Egyptians, if not before, they

had developed a remarkable knowledge of building operations, of agricultural pursuits, of the arts of government and war. They had invented an alphabet and a method of writing which became the international means of communication for generations; their religion was exceptionally pure and their laws especially just. They also had developed an original art in sculpture and in architecture. The Babylonian and the Egyptian were the oldest and for a long time the most highly developed civilizations of the world. Indeed, these two peoples made all the civilization there was, and the civilized world was then that portion of the earth which they occupied.

But later on in the history of the Semites the Hebrews appeared, a smaller race and not so original except in one regard. That was their religion and, of course, their literature, for, as we have said, the literature of primitive peoples was always religious literature, since religion and life were one and the same thing to them. The Hebrews inherited much from their relatives, the Babylonians, but surpassed them in perfecting the religious concept of life and in expressing their thought about it in the most artistic forms of poetry, story, and oratory. They had no need to bother with architecture, for they could borrow the design of a temple, nor with sculpture, for images were forbidden in their worship. Warfare they cared not for, except to protect themselves, and they were interested in visions of spiritual truth rather than practical inventions. So the Hebrews were the highest type of the Semites in carrying the racial genius in one particular to the highest point, for in the development of the prophetic genius they have surpassed anything the world has ever seen.

**Highest Type of Indo-Europeans.** Among the Indo-Europeans the Greeks have towered far above all other races of their group in their art and philosophy, and their literature is remarkably strong and beautiful in depth of thought and perfection of form. Greek sculpture and architecture have been models in all the Occident, beginning with Roman times, even to the present day in America.

The Greek philosophers are still revered as laying the foun-

dations of modern thinking. And in the days of the Great Awakening, when the intellectual life of all Europe was quickened to bear fruit in the great paintings of a Raphael and a Michael Angelo, in such wonderful cathedrals as St. Mark's and St. Peter's and such literature as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, it was the study of Greek art, philosophy, and literature that was behind it all.

Some thinkers of the present day believe that the Indo-European peoples have fallen from their supreme height of achievement found in the Greeks and that with our utilitarian trend we are destined never to regain it. But others are of quite another opinion. They regard the infusion of the Anglo-Saxon spirit and ideas as a gain, that the virility and prowess of this race is of equal excellence with the Greek genius.

These critics believe that Anglo-Saxon achievements in science and inventions may well hold as high a place as Greek sculpture and literature. Even in the realm of art there are those who maintain that a Gothic cathedral and a Shakespearian drama have points of excellence not to be surpassed even by a Phidias or an Aristophanes. True it is, at any rate, that in scientific discoveries of earth and sky and in attempts at democratic forms of government Anglo-Saxon blood has proved itself rich in originality and full of such vital energy that unique achievements have been forthcoming. Thus the Greek and the Anglo-Saxon are rivals for supremacy in the history of Indo-European races.

**Highest Type of Mongolians.** Among Mongolian peoples it is quite easy to find the race which represents the highest type of civilization. This is the Chinese. While Japan has forged ahead faster in these later generations, the Chinese have, nevertheless, had such a long and honorable history, have shown in their earlier days so much originality, and are to-day awakening from their long period of sleep with such a mighty thrill of life, that without question they are to be regarded as the race of most inherent strength and enduring genius. Accordingly, we may well place the Chinese at the head of the Mongolian group of races.

In this brief survey of the races of the world and their classification into large groups we have seen how certain ones have led in the development of original genius and civilization and that the Hebrews undoubtedly rank among these leading races.

# CHAPTER V

## THE NURSERY OF CIVILIZATION

**The Indebtedness of the Teuton to Ancient Races.** We of the Occident are largely of Indo-European origin; we are to learn how great a part Semitic influence has played in shaping our ideals. When the Teuton appeared upon the stage of human events it was Greek, Roman, and Hebrew influences which filed off his sharp corners and polished up his rough surfaces, and it was the culture to which these three nations had already attained which lured him on to think the same thoughts and to adopt in large degree the same ideals in religion, in government, and in art. To be sure, the Teuton has made his own original contribution to civilization, but the goal was first set for him by these three powerful races that had been in the field longer and had forged ahead farther than he. We are accustomed in our schools to acknowledge as a matter of course the debt we owe to the Greek and Roman genius. But with many of us our ancient history seems to begin with the Greek. The few paragraphs we read about the Egyptian and Babylonian civilizations impress us very little, and Hebrew history, if touched upon at all, is tucked away in our minds in a little corner by itself, where it can have nothing to do with any other history we study. At this point our historical perspective is entirely out of focus. Would we see history as it really is, we must take a far look, and then we will realize that even the life of the Greeks is comparatively modern, and that in the dim, mythical days of Homer, which seem almost at the beginning of things to us, David was setting up his kingdom in Jerusalem, having already behind him the inspiration and example of Abraham and Moses and all that the Hebrews and their ancestors had been able to work out in a thousand years.

**The Indebtedness of the Greeks to the Civilizations of the East.** Edward Everett Hale wrote an imaginary interview on the shores of the Mediterranean between Homer and David, and, as we have seen, this might conceivably have taken place. For now we know through the discoveries of the archæologists that the Philistines with whom David had such bloody contests belonged to that race in the island of Crete whose achievements Homer's stories celebrate. And when we read of the conflict of the Greeks with the Persians, and associate the names of Xenophon with Xerxes, of Alexander with Darius, we must realize that while we are studying one of the most interesting periods of Greek history we have come to the decline of the Persian Empire; that before the Persians were the Assyrians and before the Assyrians the old Babylonians. Indeed, historians to-day have come to the conclusion that the life and thought of Greece was influenced to a very considerable extent by Egypt and the East, by those people who had had so much longer time to develop, who were old and fixed in their ways when Greece was in her infancy, just as Greece and Rome had passed their prime when the Teuton appeared to absorb their best and transform it into something new.

It may seem strange to us that the little territory covered by the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and drained by the near-by rivers, the Nile and the Euphrates, should not only have given birth to the civilization of the world but should also have held the great nations securely within its confines for thousands of years. To-day the Mediterranean powers are by no means the greatest in the world; empires and standards of culture are to be sought for elsewhere on the globe, for the age-long supremacy of that territory has been completely handed over to other portions of the earth's surface. There is a reason for this as there is a reason for all change. The life of nations is a growth and an evolution just as is the life of animals. We are beginning to realize to-day the great extent to which the life and development of nations is affected by environment, by geographic and climatic conditions, as well as by the persistence of inherited characteristics. We stand at the vantage-point of

modern history and science, from which we may view the succession of races as they pass before us, growing up from infancy to youth, through their prime and old age, handing on their achievements to the next race, even though that race may not live in the same locality nor hold sway over the same conditions; and we can to a large extent tell the reasons for these changes, although there is much still left to discover along that line.

**Reasons for the Early Supremacy of Mediterranean Races.** Why, then, is it that the little basin of the Mediterranean became the cradle of civilization? Why did not the glory of Egypt, of Crete and Phœnicia, of Greece and Rome endure? Why should the nations spreading over the big northern continents entirely supersede these civilizations in importance and power? In the first place, the climate of the Mediterranean basin was well adapted to the youth of the race. Born in the tropics, as we believe, from the find of the first man in Java, man would always have remained an infant in that steaming, enervating climate had he not wandered far enough to find a more temperate zone, which was near enough to the sunny southland to make him feel at home in its heat and salubrious breezes and abundant vegetation, but far enough north to catch some of the bracing tonic of a winter wind, change in seasons, and even an occasional snow-storm. The new vegetation, too, was varied, and often needed encouragement, rather than being so monotonously rank in growth that little effort was required to secure food. Thus, there was enough in the climatic conditions of the Mediterranean basin and the Euphrates valley to put zest into man's blood and to develop the ingenuity and resourcefulness of primitive peoples without discouraging them with too harsh conditions at the outset. In the very nature of man it must take many generations of social inheritance for him to find out the manifold truths fundamentally essential to a people's success, such as the ways man may subdue nature, the need of co-operation of man with man, the government of masses of men, the value of the exchange of ideas as well as of commodities. In order that

men may learn these basic national facts, nature must be neither too severe nor too lenient in her demands, for it is strangely true that while human nature, to reach its best, needs prodding by just a sufficient amount of stimulus from environment, an excessive stimulus discourages and retards growth. After civilization had passed through the protective nursery of a Mediterranean climate, this southern man was forced to deliver over his achievements to his brother, nourished in a rougher northern climate. The brawn and sinew of these northern peoples, built up through the ages, did not succumb to any untoward breezes but revelled in the task of still further subduing nature. With the discoveries of their ancestors behind them, they could protect themselves in a severer climate and yet have time and vigor to spend upon culture and the refinements of society as well as upon the advancement of government and invention. Gradually the attractions of the softer air of the southland gave way before those of the invigorating atmosphere of the north, and the Mediterranean nations lost their precedence in the race for power.

Another reason for the long national supremacy of Mediterranean races lies in the fact of the independence of the various racial groups about that inland sea, each with its own resources sufficient for development along independent lines, joined with their nearness to each other and the consequent possibility of later exchange of various sorts. For each race this territory formed a little world within itself, perfectly adapted to the experiments of man's first great ventures beyond the boundaries of his own home. Within that little circle his rude sail-boat, thousands of years before an ocean liner was even dreamed of, was able to bring him to such variety of landscape, of flora and fauna, of occupational possibilities, that he needed not to fare farther in order to satisfy his wants. Plain and mountain, mineral and grain, fruit and flower, fish and fowl and animals of all sorts were to be found there, within reach of limited resources. Accordingly, in time, Egypt contained hundreds of villages along the Nile; the small island of Crete, only about one hundred and sixty miles long by from six to thirty-five

miles wide, built up a brilliant kingdom; little Greece, with her fine harbors, welcomed the world to her culture; Rome could satisfy the daintiest epicures with fish caught in the Sea of Galilee, fruit raised on the shores of the Orontes, and grain brought in an Alexandrian ship. We shall see also how the little land of Palestine cherished the choicest of ideals from the seeds gathered in a limited area but fructified with all the influences of a cosmopolitan world.

**The Ancient World Was Cosmopolitan.** The ancient world, although so much smaller than ours and moving at a very much slower pace, was, after all, cosmopolitan, if exchange of commodities and exchange of ideas make people cosmopolitan. There were comparatively few air-tight compartments even for the most isolated and provincial peoples of those days. It was, of course, far easier then than now for a man to carry his family to a secluded corner of the earth to live his own life undisturbed, but even then famine or the danger threatening a relative would drive him out of his retreat as they drove Abraham down to Egypt and to fight the battles of Lot. Our twentieth-century breakfast-tables are served with fruit from one part of the world, cereals from another, meat from another, and spices from still another, in dishes made in various places. So it was to a limited extent in the ancient world. A nomad could live for months on milk and meat and dates, but after a while his hunger for greater variety drew him into commerce with agricultural folk, where he could exchange some of his cattle or dates for cereal foods. Honey was found in one spot, salt in another, medicinal herbs in another, and the clay suitable for pottery in still another. Even in prehistoric times there is evidence that the traffic between Babylonia and Egypt was frequent. There is record that in the reign of Sargon I of Babylonia, about 3200 B.C., cedar was brought from "the west" for his building purposes. A monument has been discovered in the old capital city of Susa, dating back to about the same period, on which is inscribed the purchase by the king of lands, grain, wool, oil, copper, asses, and slaves, and these he paid for in silver. Grain must have been brought

from an agricultural country, wool and asses from the pasture lands of the nomad, oil from a spot where olive-trees flourished, copper from the copper mines possibly as far away as the Sinaitic peninsula or those in the hills west of Nineveh, and slaves, doubtless, from some other race than his own. Silver was a very early medium of exchange. The main sources of supply were Arabia, and Tarshish away off at the western end of the Mediterranean Sea. To manage all this business the monument mentions among the kings' officials a mariner, a scribe, a miller, a jeweller, a merchant.

Very early the Egyptians discovered the treasures in the Sinaitic peninsula and southern Arabia along the borders of the Red Sea. Copper and precious stones came from Sinai, gold and frankincense from Arabia; Syria furnished oil, balm, wool, and pottery. During the period of the Middle Kingdom (2160–1788 B.C.) there are records of the makers of weapons carrying their goods on asses to sell to the nomads of the east. In the reign of Thutmose III (1501–1447 B.C.) there are records of importations of grain, oil, wine, honey, dates, incense, lumber, and cattle, and coats of mail taken from the Canaanites in battle. In the Tel-el-Amarna letters there is mention made of gold sent from Egypt to Babylonia and manufactured gold sent back from Babylonia to Egypt. Precious stones, enamel, skins, wooden chariots, horses, and slaves were all articles of exchange. From Cyprus came copper, bronze, ivory, and horses, and to Cyprus were sent silver, oil, and oxen. Egypt was the great emporium for horses. Syrian pottery and metal-work were considered very superior. From Syria also came the best ointments for embalming purposes, beautiful embroideries, as is the case to-day, and excellent wines. Palestine was the great wheat and barley country. Iron was not introduced into Palestine until about 1000 B.C., but two iron Egyptian axe-heads, dating back to 1500 B.C., have been found there, lying in an ancient water-tunnel and bearing witness to Egyptian travel. Arabia probably had an extensive trade as far east as India by this time. Pirates infested the Mediterranean Sea because of the plunder they could

seize from the trading-vessels. There were at least four routes crossing Palestine from Egypt to Babylonia. Ancient people, deliberate as they were in their movements, were yet shrewd enough to economize effort and to kill more than one bird with the same stone. Therefore, when they gathered together for religious purposes they found it convenient to exchange desirable articles, and religious festivals became national fairs also, gay, noisy, cheerful, and quarrelsome.

**The Bible a Cosmopolitan Book.** The Bible is a most cosmopolitan book. We are told that Solomon "made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees that are in the lowland for abundance. And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt, and the king's merchants received them in droves." The precious stones of the high priest's breastplate must have been brought from the ends of the earth of that day, red sandstone from Sardis, crysolite from an island in the Red Sea or from Tarshish, rock crystal and garnet from Egypt, lapis lazuli from Babylonia, agate from Sicily, malachite from Sinai or Cyprus, the carbuncle from Carthage. When we pass from the Old Testament to the New, with its background of Roman government and efficiency, we are at once aware that the Mediterranean basin is a centre of varied civilizations with a remarkable system of Roman roads connecting the remotest province with the capital. Letters could not be sent as expeditiously as we can receive news in the twentieth century, but a post rate of fifty miles a day meant that even the most provincial corner must be in touch with the times and the affairs of men to a certain extent. Labor also was drawn out of its narrow circuit of local supply and demand, and emigration back and forth from east to west assisted the exchange of ideas. What men wanted they found, whether rings for their fingers or dainties for their palates or statues for their halls or poems and philosophy for their minds. The world of Jesus and Paul was truly a most cosmopolitan world; the contributions of Persians, Greeks, Syrians, Jews, Egyptians, Romans were all thrown into one great receptacle of world thought.

Fierce fires of human desire and passion were raging. What came out of this great melting-pot of human civilization that was worth while it is for us to say who can now look back and see the influences that have endured.

Thus the region of the Mediterranean basin and the Nile and Euphrates Rivers was the nursery of civilization, teaching men first how to stand upon their own feet and then the great advantages of exchange and co-operation. Through centuries of slow development man was learning these lessons, fundamental in the progress of any civilization. The countries of this circumscribed district held the achievements of the world's culture that have materially affected us of the Occident; these countries held this culture firm in their grasp for more than four thousand years of the history of mankind.

# CHAPTER VI

## A COMPARISON OF SEMITIC AND INDO-EUROPEAN CHARACTERISTICS

**The Place of Semitic Thought in the Development of Western Races.** From an exceedingly early period the Caucasian race has dominated the ancient world of the Mediterranean basin. The two branches that were the most powerful and that have persisted longest in their influence are the Indo-European and the Semitic. In the direct line of living nations the Semitic preceded the Indo-European and set the pace for him in the attainments that are possible for human beings. The Semite not only preceded the Indo-European in time but carried with him a strong religious instinct. Especially did the little branch of the Semites known as the Hebrews possess within itself a mighty spiritual force. There occurred later a tremendous impact of Indo-European and Semite. While the Indo-European was supreme in the physical world and held his own magnificently in the conquest of territory and the assumption of authority, the Semite, nevertheless, so infused his spiritual ideas into the very heart of the people that both Greek and Roman finally adopted his religion. As a result we have to-day both a Greek and a Roman church taking their origin from Hebrew sources. We must remember, further, that our Bible, adopted by the Anglo-Saxon as a part of the inheritance handed down to him by the Greek and the Roman, is of Semitic origin and that the literature embodied in it is the highest expression of the Semitic genius. The influence of the Bible upon the life and character of Anglo-Saxon people has been tremendous, perhaps as great an influence as anything purely Greek or Roman.

**Differences between the Indo-European and Semitic Way of Thinking.** When we compare the purest types, the guid-

ing genius of the two races seems to be almost opposite in spirit manifested and in mode of thinking. The Indo-European is enterprising, adventurous, progressive, inventive, analytical in thought, and philosophical. The Semite is unadventurous and more stationary in locality. He is, therefore, naturally more narrow in his interests, but he is very intense in thought and feeling at the spot where he applies himself. His imagination is of the concrete sort rather than the abstract. In his mode of getting at truth he is intuitional and prophetic rather than argumentative and rational.

**The Indo-European Is Restless and Inventive.** All this needs illustration, and we take first the spirit of enterprise and physical daring. The home of the Semitic race has continued throughout the ages to be near the Arabian peninsula, whereas it would be a difficult matter to put one's finger upon any spot in Europe or southwestern Asia which has been the abiding home of the Indo-European race. The present Hindu race was evolved by the infusion of Nordic blood from the northwest. These people moved eastward from the region near Afghanistan and settled in India, not in the very earliest period of their history, but later, after they were well established as a race. The Medes and Persians moved southwestward and finally covered a large territory which they called the Persian Empire, even encroaching on Asia Minor and Greece in their conquests. The Greeks were by no means confined to little Hellas, but ventured forth by land and sea until Alexander boasted of the largest realm that his world had ever seen, reaching from India to Alexandria and north to Macedonia. The Romans in turn clutched at all this and more, and their world extended westward as far as Spain and the British Isles. The Teutons broke up the complacency of the Roman Empire. Starting from the Danube and the north, they swarmed over the south and west, even daring to cross the wide Atlantic when there were no more kingdoms to gain in Europe. Today England's possessions extend all the way from India to Africa and North America and Germany's influence is felt as far to the west as the Hawaiian Islands. But where is the

home of the Indo-European race? Is it India, Persia, Greece, Rome, Germany, England, or the United States? The people of this stock have ever been of a restless, venturesome disposition, always seeking more worlds to conquer. Tractless forests and unbounded seas must yield up their secrets to these explorers, and even the uncharted skies are traversed by Indo-European ships of the air.

**The Semite Is More Stationary.** To be sure, the Semites, in the nomadic stage of development, roamed from one place to another, within certain circumscribed limits, as drought and famine drove them forth. But it was physical necessity, for the most part, that caused them to do this, not the eager curiosity to see what was just beyond nor the insatiable craving to acquire what no man had yet conquered. They early learned how to travel by land, on foot or by horse or camel. Probably about 2000 B.C. the horse appeard in Arabia, and the camel has always been indispensable in crossing those desert stretches. But it is an Indo-European railroad that now, after six thousand years of caravan travel, shortens the time to nine hours in the journey from Damascus to the Mediterranean coast. The Phœnicians showed the most enterprise in this regard, building ships and even sending colonies as far as Carthage and Spain. Because they proved the exception to the rest of the Semitic nations around them, they held for a long time the monopoly of shipping interests, and their merchants grew amazingly rich and powerful enough to set up and depose kings by their money power.[1] But the other Semites were content to carry their merchandise on the back of the camel, "the ship of the desert," and let the proud waves alone. The Indo-Europeans, on the other hand, as they pushed down from the western mountains into Greece, soon learned the value of the sea from their Ægean predecessors. They sailed out in the very beginning of their history to the islands of the Ægean and Mediterranean Seas and after a time were bold enough to cruise on farther to the mainland of other coasts. So far as inventions are concerned, we have inherited very lit-

[1] Isaiah 23 : 8.

tle from the Semites. It has until recently been supposed that our alphabet is one of the exceptions, that invention, at least, coming down to us from the Phœnicians. Since the great discoveries of Cretan life, however, indications seem to point toward Crete as its source, for "as knowledge grows it becomes increasingly difficult to believe that the Phœnicians were capable of the enormous analytic feat of devising an alphabet." [1]

**The Indo-Europeans Better Colonizers.** The Semites never possessed a great empire except the loosely connected one held for many years by the Assyrians. They were a most troublesome enemy to all the nations near, but even the Assyrians lacked that peculiar genius which can conquer and then assimilate another kingdom. They subdued many petty realms but never succeeded in uniting them or binding them indissolubly to the mother country. They terrified them into submission for a time, and exacted tribute and demanded hostages in abundance, but they never dreamed of winning voluntary allegiance or of sharing the achievements of their civilization with the weaker states. Persia, on the other hand, showed herself adroitly politic in winning the patriotic devotion of her subjugated peoples and Greece was wonderfully far-sighted in sharing her culture. For example, the little Hebrew nation hailed the Persian king, Cyrus, as their long-expected deliverer simply because of his generosity and willingness to allow each subject nation to retain its own customs and religion, and the fact that the New Testament is written in the Greek language instead of in the Hebrew shows how thorough had been Alexander's conquest. Greek language, Greek literature, Greek games—indeed, everything Greek—then became attractive as the standard of culture in Palestine as in all Greek colonies. The Assyrian Empire was much like some of our modern furniture, with legs and arms only glued on so that a little knock will break them loose. But the Persian and Greek empires were like solidly made chairs and benches with parts put together with mortise and tenon. This requires a peculiar talent in

[1] Macalister, *A History of Civilization in Palestine*, p. 61.

empire building, statesmanship par excellence. It is also the expression of a certain racial characteristic which crops out even in traders and commercial agents. The Greeks never founded a city for mere trading purposes. They wished to establish at that particular place all that Greece stood for, and with missionary zeal carried thither their teachers of athletics and of philosophy as well as their merchants. Quite otherwise was it with the Phœnicians, the only Semitic colonizers of any great importance. To them a new colony was merely a new trading-station, and the final ignominious collapse of Phœnicia as a power is an example of the weakness of a nation built upon money and trade alone. In other words, the Indo-European has been more generous in sharing his ideas and possessions. Moreover, with few exceptions the Semites have not possessed the genius of great generalship, while Greek and Roman history seems one continuous list of mighty generals. There are said to have been only three really great Semitic generals—the Assyrian, Tiglath-pileser; the Babylonian, Nebuchadrezzar; and the Carthaginian, Hannibal.

**Advantages of Semitic Way of Thinking.** Thus we see that in ancient history, as compared with the Indo-European, the Semite was less adventurous, more stationary in locality, less given to discovery, more content in the place in which he found himself and in enjoying the pleasures of ownership. But while this appears to an Occidental somewhat derogatory to the Semite, there were compensations. Such restless energy as the Indo-European race has exhibited tends to superficiality unless carefully guarded, especially when applied to things of sense rather than things of the spirit. Permanence has not been one of the striking characteristics of Indo-European genius, whereas the Semite has always been one of the most tenacious of individuals. He hates change and loves his own people, his own possessions, his own customs. He has been exclusive, and therefore fenced himself in from progress, but he has devoted himself passionately to the things which have interested him and meditated profoundly upon life as it has appealed to him. He is, in a word, more meditative by nature

than the Indo-European. It is true that it requires meditation to invent a new machine and an imagination that is able to picture as real a thing which does not now exist, but the Indo-European mind has been more concerned in its meditations and imagination with the physical universe and material phenomena and activities, whereas to the Semite the spiritual world is quite as real as the material and has been to him of more absorbing interest. It is, indeed, true that the great Greek philosophers were interested in the intellectual problems of religion and morals, but the Hebrews succeeded in making their ethical God so real to the minds of people that they became the greatest social reformers of ancient history because their ideas gripped the imagination even of untutored folk and moulded character.

**The Semite Highly Spiritual.** As men study more deeply the relative values of phenomena they realize that the realm of the unseen, of the spirit, is of quite as much importance as that of the seen and the obvious. Psychology, although a new science, is recognized now as most essential for the understanding of truth, because we have come to value the spiritual currents of personalities as well as the currents of electricity that move our street-cars. The Semitic mind never worked out a science of psychology as the Indo-European mind has done; but the Semite has not only believed instinctively, with the people of other races, in the controlling power of unseen spirits, he has gone much further, by picturing spiritual things in his imagination just as concretely as the Indo-European has imagined the machine he was inventing. The Semitic race is the one that has been able, beyond all other races, to bring spiritual conceptions near to human needs, so that the spiritual life depicted in their literature has been the most helpful and uplifting that the world has known.

Since the Hebrew prophets pictured a moral God as ruling the universe, history became an important factor in the thought of God's plan. While they were not philosophers in the strict sense, they are said to have evolved the first real philosophy of history, to have brought to light the conception that a moral

God had all nations and peoples under his control, using them to accomplish some great final purpose, that

> One far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

They therefore, of all people, anticipated the future with great eagerness, since they confidently believed they were to have an especial part in the making of history under God's guidance. This was to a large extent the source of their national enthusiasm. The rise and fall of empires were simply the visible signs of the coming of Yahweh, their invisible King of Righteousness. They therefore became very conscious of a high spiritual calling, and they became intensely interested in the idea of persuading all mankind to bow their knees "unto the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." Such religious enthusiasm often produces fanatical zeal, as has been exhibited by the Mohammedans, for Mohammedanism is a Semitic product and their abhorrence of the "infidel" is as intense as their loyalty to Allah. On the other hand, among the Hebrews this great religious idea which dominated their thinking resulted in some very unique and practical social measures. While exceedingly egoistic, they were more democratic than any ancient nation in their treatment of "the stranger within their gates." Even in Athens, where aliens received better treatment than in any other state in Greece, their rights were not recognized at court, whereas the Hebrew law declared that there should be "one manner of law, as well for the sojourner as for the home-born."[1] Our modern ideas of a universal humanity and the brotherhood of man come from Semitic rather than Indo-European thought. Such dreams of the future, however, lend themselves to a passive rather than an active life. Therefore, the Semitic thinking is subjective, whereas the Indo-European is largely objective.

**The Semite Concrete in His Ideas of the Spiritual.** But there is another difference in the mode of thinking of the two races. The Indo-European reasons a thing out step by step;

[1] Lev. 24 : 22.

he demonstrates his truth. The Semite feels that the truth that he sees must be so, but without stopping always to tell himself just why. This type of mind is called the intuitive, in contrast to the rational. It jumps intermediate stages over which the rational mind carefully deliberates. But it hits the mark quite as truly and often sees the goal while it is further off. On the other hand, when the Indo-European begins to think upon spiritual themes, he is so interested in the steps, the machinery by which he arrives ultimately at his goal, that the process is often more real to him than the end and the life of the object may be gone when he reaches it. This results in abstract thinking. For example, he thinks of God as an essence of some kind, or a mere force. To the Semite, God is a king, or a warrior, or a father, or a shepherd of his sheep. Of course, all peoples in certain stages of their development think in symbols. The old Greeks imagined Zeus on Mount Olympus and the Teuton reverenced Thor, the god of war. But in the later stages of thought the Indo-European developed an abstract philosophy, whereas the Semite has remained concrete in his imagination and understanding of the realm of the spirit. As a consequence, our creeds, or the explanation of the steps of our thinking, come from Greek philosophical influence, whereas our religious feeling and assurance bears the stamp of the Semitic. The philosopher and the scientist, analytical in thought and cold in feeling, represent the highest type of thinking among the Indo-Europeans; the prophet, intuitional and very intense, is the climax of Semitic attainment. According to a noted historian: "Prophecy surpasses in depth of insight, breadth of view, keenness of sympathy, and height of idealizing conception anything which in any age 'the supreme Caucasian' has contributed to the moral interpretation of human actions or the direction and encouragement of human endeavor."

# *PART II*

# A SKETCH OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

# CHAPTER VII

## PRIMITIVE ANIMISM

**Why This Survey Is Necessary.** The Hebrew prophet, the climax of Semitic genius, occupies so high a place among the world's benefactors that we should try to understand just wherein the uniqueness of the position consists. In order to do this it will be necessary to survey briefly the development of religious ideas until we come to the Hebrew prophet and his message.

**The Very First Religious Ideas.** The majority of scholars hold that the religious impulse is natural to all mankind. It is to be found among all savage peoples, and, however crude the form, it is always endeavoring to find some expression. Professor Ratzel, in his *History of Mankind,* states that "ethnography knows no race devoid of religion but only differences of degree to which religious ideas are developed." At first this religious impulse was, doubtless, simply wonder and admiration of power, especially the invisible power which makes things happen, coupled with a vague search after the reality of the invisible world, the world of spirit. We do not know just how it began to express itself, for at the earliest historic period religious ideas had developed so far that their origin can only be guessed at. Yet there has been enough left in the relics of the Neolithic age, when placed side by side with the beliefs and practices of backward races still surviving, to give us grounds for a very fair surmise as to how it started. At this point it should be noted that primitive does not always stand for ancient, but rather for a very early stage of development. There are backward peoples to-day that have not progressed beyond primitive ideas. Moreover, under primitive conditions all knowledge was religious knowledge, for it was wrapped up

in religious feeling; knowledge and religion were inseparable. Even though we are not absolutely sure in just what order the first religious ideas began to appear, we do know definitely that there were three phases of primitive religious belief which came to expression quite universally. These are called animism, fetichism, and ancestor-worship.

**Animism.** One of the very first things which evidently attracted men as they became consciously intelligent was the fact of the *life* stirring in the world. They perceived that animals were alive much as they themselves were, that trees and plants grew and died and came to life again, that breezes blew and rains fell to revive a parched land, that the sun, moon, and stars seemed to move in the heavens, that life flourished in the sunshine and died in the dark. They were not so discriminating as we have come to be in our scientific classification of living things. They did not enumerate different classes of life; to them everything was alive, in much the same way and had the same kind of spirit within. At first, perhaps, only everything that could move seemed to them alive; by and by, however, inanimate objects also were supposed to contain spirits, for could not a rock from a cliff fall upon one's head and do serious damage? Power is here manifest, a mysterious power, and wherever there is mystery there is more or less of awe and reverence. Men wonder what is behind the power and set their imaginations to work to solve the mystery. Thus did all knowledge begin.

**Origin of Ideas Shown by Derivation of Words.** The origin and development of some of the earliest ideas is shown to us by a study of the derivation of words. Take, for example, our English word *spirit*, which comes from the Latin *spiro*, to breathe. Primitive man observed the fact that, in both men and animals, that which seemed absolutely essential to life, the breath, was a very intangible something. At most times invisible, it could be taken into the body and expelled, but when it was gone for any length of time the body itself was lifeless. Thus the breath came to be synonymous with life and life itself was thought of as a spirit. Our word

*ghost* is the same as the German *geist* and the Dutch *geest*, and these are related to an Icelandic word, *geisa*, which means "to rage," as wind or fire rages. Our words *gust* and *geyser* come from the same root. Western Australians use the same word, *wang*, for both breath and spirit. In the Mohawk language the word for *soul* is *atouritz*, and this comes from the word *atourion*, meaning to breathe. To the native Nicaraguan the spirit is a breeze which passes in or out of the body through the mouth or nostrils. It seems, therefore, a universal primitive idea that the breath was the spirit of a man. In some places it was customary for a son to inhale the breath of his dying father in order that he might receive and preserve his father's spirit.

**A Man's "Shade."** A man's shadow also was a mysterious thing. It seemed to be a part of him, like him and following him, yet separable from his body; it was his double. Thus man's shade became a most important element in his thought of himself. When the soul passed out of the body at death it was his shade that went to the underworld. There is an old German saying that a door should not be slammed lest a soul get pinched in it. In some countries doors and windows are opened at a death that the soul may not be detained. In certain localities the soul was supposed to take the form of a bird and fly away, and thus the bird became a favorite symbol of the soul. Some of the Greenlanders thought the soul of a dead man could be brought back to re-enter the body and that a man going on a journey might leave his soul behind. These legends and customs are the survival of a very primitive philosophy of life.

**Dreams.** Dreams, too, seemed very real to ancient people. They believed that the invisible self left the body during sleep and actually went to the places and performed the deeds dreamed about. They thought that the spirits of other sleepers were away also, that they might meet and have great adventures. It is a common belief among savages to-day that dreams are real. Some of them have been known to endeavor to carry out in daylight the orders they supposed they received

in the night from their masters, and for long ages men trusted dreams as portents of the future.

**Spirits Everywhere.** Since to primitive man the phenomena of breath and shadow were common both to human beings and to animals, he did not class himself as essentially different and higher. The grunts of beasts were not more incoherent to him than the guttural sounds of a strange tribe. And spirits were everywhere, speaking through the whisperings of the leaves and the creakings of old tree trunks, the whistling of the wind, the rushing of the water, and the murmurings of insects. It did not seem unnatural to him to imagine that his spirit could enter the body of some animal or that animals had spirits like his own. Men took the names of animals; they imagined that animals often possessed human characteristics. Our Indian folk-lore is full of tales of the Coyote Man and the Red-Spider Woman, of how a boy turned into a prairie-dog or a snake. Some people had even the idea that they could hide their souls where none could find them and that the animals did likewise. Among certain tribes the coyote was thought to keep his soul in the tip of his nose or in the end of his tail to avoid disaster.

**Fear of the Spirits.** This hiding of the soul was, of course, the result of fear, for fear very soon developed in a world so full of spirits and mysterious powers. Dangers beset man's paths wherever he went; everything unknown was dreaded. To him these shadowy unknown powers were both good and evil; they could spring out at him as a tiger and bite him as a snake; they might bless him with their sunshine and guide him with their light. He seemed to be at the mercy of powers much stronger than himself. In Paraguay the natives thought a terrific storm was an attack on them by the evil spirits, and they would rush out against the storm yelling their war-cry and brandishing spears. Among heathen peoples all over the world there have been established ceremonies for driving off demons at stated times. In some spots in India it is at harvest-time, that the demons may not infest the granaries; in other places it is at seed-time, that the crops may flourish. Among

the Fijis it was at the appearance of a certain fish known as the sea-slug, usually in November. In their ceremony an influential man would climb a tree and pray to the spirit of the sky for a blessing upon the crops, favorable winds, and all that made for prosperity; then every one in the village would set up a tremendous din, pounding and shouting to drive the evil spirits away. In Japan there is a custom, celebrated on the last night of the year, called the "exorcism of the evil spirit." The man who performs the ceremony is called a "year-man." Dressed in fine robes, with a sword at his waist, he goes at midnight through all the rooms of the house, carrying in his left hand a box of roasted beans on a lacquered stand. These he scatters about, pronouncing in a loud voice the words, "Out with the devils," and in a low tone, "In with the luck." After the evil spirits have been driven out a charm is set up over the door to prevent their return.

**Origin of Certain Beliefs.** All of these customs are the relics of the early animistic belief that the world is peopled with spirits. Many other beliefs and customs arose in the same manner. Some of the abnormal physical phenomena familiar to us, such as nightmare and catalepsy, were to primitive peoples sources of great terror. The word catalepsy means literally the "seizing" of the body by some demon, and the Peruvian word for nightmare means the "bosom-clutching spirit." The serpent especially was an object of fear and hence quite universally reverenced; wriggling so horribly and gliding so rapidly and silently, sloughing its skin periodically, able to fascinate with its eye and poison with its bite, it was supposed to be possessed with an evil spirit, if indeed it was not the Great Evil Spirit himself. A reminder of its worship is found even so far west as our own country, in the great Serpent Mound in Ohio. In general, animals were reverenced not only as evil spirits but as the abode of good spirits as well. In Egypt the cat, the bull, and the crocodile were especially sacred; in Greece the horse, the mouse, the ram, and the lobster, as well as the snake, were sacred animals. In some places the bodies of dead animals of the species sacred to a tribe came

to be cared for as religiously as the dead bodies of men. This is why in Egypt there are so many mummified remains of cats and monkeys in the tombs.

**Good and Evil Gods.** It is not strange, therefore, that such a universal belief in the presence everywhere of spirits, some stronger than others and able to inflict evil as well as to bring good, should result in reverence for the strong and fear of evil spirits. It would be surprising, indeed, if certain of these powers, evil as well as good, had not been worshipped as gods. Some peoples thought that the good gods did their work and then left man alone, that only the evil spirits stayed around to see what was being done. The African Bantu thinks to-day that these evil spirits have so much curiosity that he must pray continually: "Go away, we don't want you. Come not into this house." The original use of bells in worship was to drive away demons. Sometimes primitive man conceived of one spirit who was greatest of all and supreme over all creation. This was the Creator. The word among the native Australians is *Baiame*, "the cutter-out." Thus he was conceived as one who creates by cutting out patterns.

**The Earth-Mother.** A very general belief after man had arrived at the agricultural stage of civilization was the belief in the Earth-Mother. She was the one who brought fertility to the soil, who caused the grain to grow and the fruit to ripen. Sometimes she was worshipped in connection with the spirit of the sky but always as the great supplier of the wants of man. She was everywhere in the earth, and when the soil was disturbed in order to lay the foundation of a house her spirit was often appeased by sacrificing a victim, burying it under the foundation wall, thus protecting the house and insuring its continuance. There grew up a great variety of rites and ceremonies in the worship of the Earth-Mother. It was not long before the worship of the spirit of the earth in general gave way to the belief in particular spirits dwelling in the various products of the earth. Thus we find that in India the Rice-Mother was worshipped, in Europe the Wheat-Mother and Barley-Mother, in America the Maize-Mother. There are

many spring and harvest customs all over the world which have come down from this belief in a goddess of the corn and other grains. The last sheaf is often made to look like the human form and called the Harvest-Mother or the Corn-Mother or the Great-Mother and brought home with fitting ceremony. Sometimes the grain from it is mixed with the next year's seed to insure fruitfulness. These symbolic ceremonies are survivals of a real belief in a spirit dwelling within the grain.

**Tree-Worship.** Trees also were among the first and most universal objects to be reverenced. There is scarcely a country in the world that does not show the traces of tree-worship. Many rude carvings have been left, showing the people as they paid homage to a sacred tree. Many tribes have had a great aversion to cutting down certain trees supposed to be the residences of the spirits. There is a spot in India to-day where no tree is cut nor even dead branches used for fuel, although fire-wood is very scarce. The Ojibway Indians would not cut down living trees because of the pain the trees would suffer. In early days sacrifices were offered under the shadow of a sacred tree and offerings hung on its branches or placed at its foot or on a near-by table where the god could easily reach them. Among the Greeks the god Dionysus, who is best known as the god of the vine, was also called "Dionysus of the tree" or "Dionysus in the tree." The pine-tree was one of his favorites, and the Corinthians were commanded to worship a particular pine-tree "equally with the god." Zeus himself was the oak god of Dodona. Virgil speaks of the oak as "Jove's own tree." Artemis was worshipped in Arcadia as the goddess of the nut-tree and the cedar and in Laconia as the goddess of the laurel and the myrtle. The Druids held the oak-tree in special reverence and performed their religious rites in the depths of oak forests. When an oak died they stripped off its bark and made it into a pillar or a cross or some emblem of the god and continued to worship it. Among the Chaldeans the cedar was the especial tree of the god Ea; in Egypt the acacia was associated with Osiris and in Persia the cypress

with Mithra. Thus, after civilization had advanced so far that there was a pantheon of gods, the old belief in tree spirits clung to religious beliefs and customs. The many remains of sacred groves are a sign of this. The sacred wreaths and branches which used to be carried in processions is another evidence. In Greece and Rome a worshipper placed on his head a wreath from a particular tree that he might be in closest communion with the deity. There were wood-nymphs also as well as wood-demons. The Arabian *jinn* is a hairy monster living in thickets and by water and able to assume all sorts of shapes. A recent traveller could not persuade his Bedouin guide to pick a certain water-plant for fear of offending the *jinn* of the lake.

**Plant-Worship.** All sorts of plants as well as trees have been reverenced. Often the life of a person was supposed to be so intimately connected with the life of a plant that when it withered the person died. Among some of the Africans, when a child is born it is customary to set out a certain plant behind the house, which must be tended very carefully, for they believe that if it withers the child will die. Different clans have different birth plants, such as the banana, the sugar-cane, or the fig-tree.

**Worship of Water.** Water also was worshipped in primitive times. Rivers and springs became objects of reverence as life-givers. Especially was this true in dry and arid countries. The people of the desert regard an oasis as sent from heaven, and to them a spring gushing out of the dry sand seems the most wonderful of objects. In all branches of the Semitic race springs have kept their sanctity to the present day, and sacred springs are constantly met with in Arabia, in Palestine, and in Phœnicia. Formerly each spring was supposed to have its spirit, or *baal*, who presided over it. Rivers, too, were very early recognized as the source of life, and so there have been a sacred Nile and Euphrates and Ganges and Tiber. We celebrate the fascinating qualities of well and lake or brook and river in our poetry. But what is pure imagination to us was reality to the ancient. Water was full of life and could do things: make the grass to grow and the fish to flourish or sweep

the landscape with an awful flood or seize the swimmer with the cramp and drown him in a moment. The water spirits could be kind or cruel, and so he prayed to them or tried to propitiate them with gifts. The ancient Babylonians bathed in the Euphrates, praying the god to carry away their diseases. In Bohemia even in recent years the "Waterman" has been believed in. In Grimm's fairy-tales the mischievous nix enticed the unwary to a watery grave. In India there are horrible heathen customs still indulged in to placate the river-god. And in various parts of the world to-day cripples flock to certain springs to be cured, leaving their crutches as a votive offering to the healing spirit. The Semites worshipped flowing water especially. The ancient Peruvians regarded the ocean as the most powerful of their gods. The Greek Poseidon or the Roman Neptune were the lords of the sea, worshipped with the greatest awe by the sailors of the deep.

**Fire-Worship.** Fire also has been from remote ages one of the wonders of the world, in early times revered as the sacred abode of the fire-god. From this sprang the Persian fire cult, one of the most interesting of early religions.

**Worship of Stones and Metals.** Stones and metals also received their quota of homage and soon became fetiches. Stone-worship is one of the most ancient forms of religion, covering the Western as well as the Eastern world. A seventeenth-century writer says, in his description of the Peruvians, that when their worship of a certain stone was given up a parrot flew from it into another stone which was then worshipped. The Fijis thought gods dwelt in black stones and that the stones married and had children. What is considered a very striking example of modern animism is displayed by the Malayans in their belief in a spirit in tin.

**Sacred Mountains.** Mountains became sacred, perhaps, because of their grandeur and relations to storms and clouds. Some races have located paradise on the summits of high mountains, believing them to be the especial abode of the spirits.

**Origin of Superstitious Beliefs of To-Day.** Thus far we have been describing the very primitive religious conception

called animism, which is the belief that the whole world is alive. This aliveness meant either that everything that man beheld was itself actual spirit or else that it contained a spirit, that spirits were in everything, that the material world was simply the house for the spiritual or rather contained the many houses harboring the spirits. These spirits had very free admission to all kinds of houses and might escape from them at any moment. Their interchange of abodes was quite universal. Things which we do not consider alive at all were formerly worshipped, not as symbols of really living objects, but as the real live things themselves. Power resided there, and to the ancient mind all power was spirit power. Some of this primitive belief has come down to us of the present day. We call it superstition, which is quite appropriate, for when we trace that word to its origin we find that it comes from the Latin *superstes*, meaning something that remains over. The superstitious beliefs which various peoples have carried over to the present time are many of them the remains of that primitive animistic conception held at the very dawn of thought.

# CHAPTER VIII

## FETICHISM AND ANCESTOR-WORSHIP

**Fetichism.** A second of these primitive forms of religion is called fetichism. It is very similar to animism, but seems to represent another step in the thought about the spiritual world. The word fetich comes from the Portuguese and means charm or talisman. On their voyages the Portuguese explorers of the fifteenth century had found the west African negroes reverencing pieces of stone and other small inanimate objects supposed to bring them blessing or harm, and these they called by the name *feitiços*. Later they applied this name to the beads, medals, and crucifixes which the sailors had been in the habit of carrying about with them, supposing that they would therefore be protected in some mysterious manner. But long before the Portuguese race arose fetichism had been common, and it meant something more essentially religious than the mere carrying about of a charm or an amulet, a mascot or "luck bones."

**Origin of the Idea.** This custom discovered among the Africans was but a relic of a very common primitive belief. The ancients believed that a spirit or god was attracted to a certain object and accordingly imparted to that object certain of his qualities which made it effective or sacred. For instance, an animal's claws or paws were worn on the person because they were thought to possess a portion of the same spirit which the whole animal possessed. The Indians wear the claws of the grizzly bear that they may be endowed with its courage and ferocity. Tufts of eagles' down may be found in the hat of the Tyrolese hunter because he thinks he can thus gain the clear vision of the eagle. Among the Dyaks of Borneo deer's flesh, when eaten, is supposed to impart the timidity of the animal, and venison is, therefore, refused by young men who

want to be brave. In Paraguay men feed upon the bull, the stag, and the boar rather than upon such tender food as eggs, hens, sheep, and fish, which they think will impart sloth and languor. The eyes and tongue of a freshly killed enemy are often torn out and fed to boys to make them good warriors. A young Indian thinks that he will be shown in a dream the "medicine" that is to protect him all his life. It may be part of an animal or some plant or stone or some hand-made article, such as a pipe or knife. When he awakes he hunts for the object of his dream until he finds it, and then keeps it by him all his life, doing homage to it, even sacrificing animals and making feasts in its honor, and finally having it buried with him as the assurance of safe guardianship to the happy hunting-grounds. Thus arose the idea that the spirits used certain objects to express their will, either good or bad. It was good luck people wanted, therefore they hunted for such objects as were possessed, according to their belief, by a spirit of power and beneficence, and they were very careful not to offend the spirit within but to do it sufficient homage to keep it in a gracious mood. Articles that have been worn by some saint or god are supposed to possess a portion of their divine power. In the Pacific islands a king often wore a red feather taken from the image of a god because it endowed him with divine strength, even sometimes allying him with the gods themselves. Especially have objects peculiar in form or characteristic been chosen as fetiches, as, for instance, the deformed horn of a deer, the trigger of a gun, a queerly shaped stone, a parti-colored feather, or the tooth of a saint. Men have believed that some special power belonged to such striking objects.

**Limitation of Fetich.** Fetichism is animism specialized. The fetich is supposed to work in one particular manner and is therefore useful for a definite purpose. The power contained in it is not general but special. Therefore it is necessary to have many fetiches. One man is said to have possessed twenty thousand and to have known for what purpose each was to be used. A fetich is different from an idol, for an idol is either simply the symbol or image of the deity or

else the abode of the god himself, while the fetich is supposed to possess some of the actual power of the god or to be the instrument that he uses to effect his will. It possesses life which comes from the spirit, with power to protect, heal, or bless, and often to speak. For example, certain Brazilian tribes used a rattle or "maraca" at their ceremonies. It was a calabash rattle, that is, a rattle made from the dried shell of a gourd with a handle and a hole into which stones were put. This they shook, believing the noise to be the spirit speaking to them. Great reverence was due these "maracas." They would set them up, burn incense to them, and regard them as the definite instrument of the god for revealing his will.

**A Symbol Often Transformed into a Fetich.** In many cases objects which had been representatives of the god at first ceased to be merely symbols and became fetiches, that is, were worshipped as possessing the very spirit of the god. Often the fetich was prayed to and sacrifices offered to it. The worship of "stocks and stones" [1] has thus become fetichism in many instances, and there are many ancient remains of such worship. In India to-day certain races set up a bamboo pole which stands for one of their goddesses. A hog is sacrificed to it every year and every month women bring an offering of eggs. Sometimes the fetich is a stone, for stone-worship persisted very late, even in Europe. In some of the mountain districts of Norway not many years ago the peasants had the practice of selecting round stones which they washed every Thursday evening, probably in honor of Thor, the god of that day. Then they would smear them with butter before the fire and place them on fresh straw to bring good luck to the house. To make the charm more efficacious they occasionally steeped them in ale.

**Difference between a Fetich and an Idol.** Not far removed from this is the tale of the Hindu officer who devoted several hours every day to the elaborate worship of several round pebbles. However, he took them for the *symbol* of divine omnipotence rather than for objects really possessing

[1] See note, Chapter XII, p. 112.

divine power. This is the difference between a true fetich and an idol. An idol was at first the representation of a god which afterward came to be regarded as the very god himself. But a fetich is a mere instrument through which a portion of the god's power is allowed to work, and the worship of this object is fetichism. The spirit in a fetich must always remain the same, while the spirit of a god may change about and manifest itself in many ways. That is, the fetich represents one special divine power all the time. If a man had good luck once with a certain fetich he thought he would again in a similar undertaking, and if a series of successes occurred his fetich became so valuable that the neighbors wanted to try its efficacy also. He therefore became a kind of priest in the employment of his wonderful fetich.

**Modern Survivals of Fetichism.** Very modern survivals of fetiches crop out here and there. A Russian peasant was known not long ago to be on the point of committing a crime, but he first covered the icon in his room that it might not see the deed. In Scotland not so many years ago the Bible was treated as a fetich by being laid upon the door-step to keep out witches. Indeed, the worship of the Bible has approached very nearly to fetichism with many people when they have considered it possessed of some peculiar power of blessing whether they understood a word of it or not.

**Totemism.** Closely allied to fetichism is what is known as totemism. Totemism is really tribal fetichism. The members of a tribe or clan feel themselves all akin, with the same blood in their veins. They wish to take some symbol to show their unity and choose a plant or an animal or some other natural object. It may, for example, be a wolf, as among some of the Indians, or a plantain, as with an African tribe. The wolf or plantain then becomes the badge or symbol of unity. They wear the skin if it is an animal, or the plumage if it is a bird, as a means of identifying themselves with the totem. They tattoo its likeness on the flesh of the new-born infant. The young man must submit to certain rites and ceremonies before he is recognized as a full-fledged brave

under the totem badge. Often these ceremonies are secret, for they are the initiation into the "mysteries" of the clan, and the uninitiated are kept away. They are often accompanied by a dance. In many cases there were strict laws against intermarriage within the totem clan, and the descent was usually traced through the mother.

**The Blood Covenant.** If an outsider wished to become a member of the brotherhood, there were two or three ways of artificially introducing the real blood of the clan into the veins of the one initiated. Incisions were sometimes cut in the arms of two people and the bleeding parts put together, or one sucked the blood from a wound made in the other's flesh, or some of the blood from both was mixed with another fluid and both drank of the mixture, or an animal was slain as a sacrifice and both partook of its blood. Such a blood-brother might not marry within the tribe, but a man could marry his half-sister if the relationship came through the father rather than the mother. The blood covenant is not confined to totemism. It is found among many people, whether or not they had totems, as is also the custom of exchanging garments as a covenant of friendship. Garments were therefore often hung upon sacred trees and idols, as is the case in Palestine to-day. The totem was, however, supposed to guard the blood-relationship of a clan. Among the Emus of Australia all members of the clan are bound to support each other in case of need. The spirit of the totem became the guardian spirit of the tribe. Totemism is thus a community affair.

**Totem More Than a Symbol.** But a totem is more than a mere symbol. Primitive peoples believed, as we saw in the discussion of animism, that there was a kinship between the spirits of men and the spirits of animals and plants. Therefore, when a choice of a totem was made it was because there was supposed to be some real kinship between the animal spirit or the plant spirit and the spirit of the tribe. There have been various theories for the reason for the choice. Some have thought it was because of a fancied resemblance of the family or tribal characteristics to those of the animal or plant

and others because some superior quality in the object was much admired and desired by the clan. At any rate, a particular species of plant or animal was sacred to a certain tribe. It was in most cases never to be cut down by them or killed or eaten, although in some places the custom of eating the totem animal ceremonially and sparingly has been observed, and in a few instances it might be eaten freely. It was, moreover, always a species, never an individual in the species. Thus, for example, an entire human tribe would be allied to the whole wolf or lion tribe. The tribe would then take the name of the object chosen as totem, and it was not a far step to imagine after a time that the tribe had descended originally from the spirit of that particular animal or plant. Some Indian tribes of Alaska had their totem-poles, with the representation of an animal's head at the summit and on them carved the supposed history of the relation of the family to the animal. The totem-pole would be set up in front of a dwelling in honor of the dead. Some of them have very curious myths concerning their origin. For example, the Hurons account for their Snake and Hawk clans by tracing them back to the marriage of a woman with a snake or hawk. We are not sure that primitive people ever worshipped their totem as an actual god, yet we know that the ancients universally reverenced their animal brothers as very wonderful beings endowed with superhuman powers, and it was but a step from such regard of an animal to its worship.

**Ancestor-Worship.** A third very early phase of religious expression is found in ancestor-worship. Where does a man's spirit go when he dies? is a question as old as human intelligence. There is a close connection between animism, totemism, and ancestor-worship, for, as we have seen, some people imagined that the spirits of men and animals were akin, and therefore it was easy to believe that the spirits of the dead went into animals; from that it was but a step to the thought that the guardian spirit in their totem was their ancestor. Among the Arabs certain animals were not eaten because they were supposed to be men in disguise. Some have thought

that every time a child was born it was the reincarnation of an ancestor's spirit.

**Origin of the Belief.** The ancients believed in ghosts and shades, that the soul could free itself from the body and when freed had much greater powers, could wander about over the earth and enter places closed to the man who was still hampered by a body. The spirits of ancestors could thus most decidedly help or hinder the affairs of the living. It was therefore not strange that people began to revere the spirits of the departed, to pray to them for help and to pay them homage. They would deck their tombs with flowers and have festivals in their honor. At the funeral feast the ghost was supposed to partake of the invisible soul of the food while the living consumed the rest.

**Sheol or Hades.** The habitation of the spirits was thought to be an underground world where the spirits went at death. This was called Hades; Sheol was the name used by the Hebrews. Perhaps the thought was suggested by the fact that the bodies were buried in the earth in graves or tombs and from the additional fact that some of the caverns of the earth seemed to extend down interminably. The belief in Hades was common to the Egyptians, the Semites, the Hindus, the Greeks, and the Romans even after civilization had had thousands of years in which to develop.

**Offerings to the Dead.** In Egypt people called the spirit of a man his "ka," in Babylonia his "zi," and this spirit was supposed to resemble the body exactly—to be the man's spiritual double. The "ka" needed nourishment in the underworld, they thought, and in order to reach him they made a portrait-statue of the man and placed it in a little chamber in the tomb. Since the statue was precisely the size and shape of the body, the "ka" could enter it and receive food through the openings left for the purpose. Offerings for the dead therefore became a sacred obligation upon relatives. It was at first a labor of love, but after a time it became such a burden that rich people would hire others to perform the service and would even endow the tomb to insure perpetual

care. This led to a priesthood of the tomb. It was a family custom among the Romans also, as they arose from supper, to lay a portion of food upon the burning hearth as an offering to the Lares. The Lares were waxen images of the Manes or shades, standing around the family hearth to represent the invisible presence and protection of the spirits of their ancestors. Some of our American Indians would burn blankets that the spirit might keep warm or throw liquor into the fire that he might have something to drink. Primitive people thought that the spirits needed assistance in their travels through the underworld. This was the reason for the Egyptian classic, *The Book of the Dead,* containing directions for conduct after death as well as preparation for it. Among the Mexicans rich men were known to have a priest killed when they died that they might still have his advice in making the long journey.

**The Powers Possessed by Ancestors.** Disease and calamity were ascribed by the ancients to the spirits of ancestors who had been offended in some way. Either the ghosts felt themselves neglected or were jealous of the living or lonely in the underworld. If they were very angry they caused tempests and shouted their disapproval in the thunder. Death by lightning was due to the anger of the ancestors. When an Indian fell by accident into the fire his comrades believed an ancestor pushed him in because he had neglected the customary worship. If the spirits were lonely they were supposed to snatch away others to keep them company. It was a common belief that men who died by violence might return to earth if they could find substitutes. In Ireland there is a legend that the spirit of the last buried person must watch in the churchyard until some one else is buried there; some say that he is obliged to become a servant in the spirit world, carrying wood and water, until another person comes.

**Prevalence of Ancestor-Worship.** Ancestor-worship has been prevalent in many countries, especially Africa, India, and Japan, but it is in China that it has been carried furthest, becoming the dominant religion of the land. Temples are

erected to the dead; the Emperor himself twice a year pays reverence in the temple of the great Confucius. In every Chinese house there are little wooden tablets upon which are inscribed the names of parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents for many generations, to whom meat and drink are occasionally offered. One reason for lack of progress in China has been the belief that ancient customs were sacred to the ancestors and therefore must not be set aside. An American traveller describes a bridge in the province of Hunan which was once upon a time built to span a stream. The river has long since changed its course, leaving dry land under the bridge. The coolies, however, may not go straight across the land, but must climb the flight of steps at either end of the bridge with whatever load they carry, just as their ancestors have done for generations. The graves of ancestors are so sacred that it has been a very difficult matter to build straight railroads, so great has been the objection to crossing cemeteries. Chinese law makes the opening of a grave without permission a crime worthy of death.

**Kinds of Ancestor-Worship.** Ancestor-worship is of two sorts, the worship of the departed members of one's own family and the worship of heroes and holy men. The ancients thought the spirits of the departed members of a household were still interested in its affairs and especially that the head of a family took pride in the achievements of the descendants. The young Chinaman of to-day still tries hard in his competitive examination in order to glorify his dead ancestors. In southern Guinea great respect is paid the aged; if trouble comes to the community large companies have been known to assemble on the brow of a hill and call for help most pathetically to the spirits of their ancestors. Hero-worship is especially pronounced among the common people of China. They provide shrines in the living-room of their houses for their own ancestors, but heroes have temples built in their honor. Thus in every city there is a temple to Confucius containing a series of courts and a hall called the Hall of the Great Perfection. At the end of this is placed the inscription: "The Blessed

Sometime Teacher, Master K'ung." There is an elaborate ritual of four stages, a greeting of the spirits, the presentation of offerings, the removal of offerings, and finally a parting salutation to the spirits. All of this is accompanied by singing, instrumental music, and dancing. In India neighbors think they are very fortunate to have the tomb of a holy man within their borders. If he has been dead some time they begin to think that his birth and death were supernatural and his tomb becomes a shrine. Thus the primitive conceptions of ancestor-worship have been elaborated and come down in the form of established religion to people living to-day.

# CHAPTER IX

## MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

**Dawning of Scientific Spirit.** The crude imaginings concerning the source and character of life which we have seen embodied in primitive religious conceptions were the beginnings of philosophy. The dawning of the scientific spirit may likewise be traced to them. Since man thought that the world was peopled with spirits, some benign and some malicious, and all showing more or less of human characteristics, such as anger, pleasure, jealousy, or kindness, it was most natural for him to set his brain to work to see how he could manage these spirits. He wanted their favor and blessing; he wished to avert calamity. How could he induce the spirits to grant him his desires? How could he propitiate them when they were angry? And how could he use them for his own purposes and against his neighbors when he wished revenge for some unfriendly act? These were questions which arose very early in man's mind. He therefore set to work with all the ingenuity he possessed to discover ways and means of making use of the spirit world. As the generations went on his ideas about managing spirits crystallized and took form in certain practices; these were grouped together and developed until they became the definite religious cults of magic, witchcraft, divination, and astrology. All of these forms of religious belief and expression we consider to-day exceedingly superstitious, and yet in an enlightened and scientific age like our own there are still many relics of these primitive forms of belief.

**Magic Control of Demons.** Perhaps the earliest form to appear was magic. At any rate, we know that in Babylonia the Sumerians, who lived there in the prehistoric days before the Semitic migration, used incantations for the purpose of

influencing the spirits. Some of the clay tablets upon which these were written have been discovered. They are considered the oldest known documents of the kind. Their object seems to have been to prevent physical ills and to drive away the demons of disease.

**Medical Magic.** In Egypt in earliest days the priests practised medical magic, driving away sickness by the use of amulets and conjuring the powers hostile to disease. Thus the "medicine-man" appears, akin to the Indian medicine-man. In Australia he is not always a doctor, but may be a "rain-maker," a seer, or a spirit-medium. Archæologists have found Egyptian papyri written over with magic incantations against crocodiles and serpents, against the "evil eye" and all kinds of sickness. The Egyptians had also mystic words that were considered very powerful in exorcising evil spirits.

**The Evil Eye.** The belief in the "evil eye" has been quite general even down to the present. It goes back to the belief that an evil spirit can harm a person by looking at him. This dire power is called in the East simply "the Eye." A person who possesses it wants a thing that he admires and immediately smites the person who has it with his eye. There are various ways of preventing the working of this power. The natives of Palestine, who are very much afraid of the evil eye, use as an antidote against it a charm which is a mystic eye of blue beads or bits of blue glass with white centres and a black dot in the middle. These preventive charms or amulets are often fastened around the necks of the children. The natives of Palestine hold the additional belief that blue or gray eyes have exceptional power and can see into the ground and detect hidden treasures.

**Colors and Precious Stones.** To many Orientals the mere color blue is a charm, and they therefore wear blue beads and hang them around the necks of the animals upon which they ride. Precious stones are likewise supposed to have marvellous powers. An opal is supposed to bring bad luck. The word amethyst comes from the Greek word *amethustos*, meaning "not drunken"; the stone was thought by the ancient

Greeks to be a charm against intoxication. They also believed in a stone that cured snake-bites and was called the snake-stone. Amber beads were carried by those having weak eyes; looking through the beads was thought to strengthen the sight. The people of Italy ascribed magical properties to antimony. They used the following invocation: "Antimony, who art of zinc and copper! thou most powerful, I keep thee ever by me, that thou mayest banish from me evil people and bring good luck to me."

**Other Magical Beliefs.** Some people still think that if their ears burn they are being talked about. Originally this was regarded as a warning sent by a guardian spirit. If a person sneezed he must say "God bless you," lest an evil spirit enter his body or lest he die. In China there is a custom of making grave clothes long before a person expects death. They should be made by the young, who have presumably many years to live, and who thus impart long life to the future owner of the clothes. There is one garment that is especially rich and costly, made of deep blue silk, with the word for "long life" embroidered upon it in gold thread. This is the finest present that can be made to an aged parent. In China gongs are beaten to drive evil spirits away. In Palestine if a man has sciatica an old woman must be chosen to go alone out of the village and hunt for a particular shrub which camels eat. When she has found it she must make its stem and roots pliable by pulling and twisting and then place a stone upon it and return home by a different way. This is supposed to cure the man. In a certain Palestinian village, if an animal is lost some one reads the twenty-third psalm aloud. When the last word is read another person shuts up a knife, razor, or a dagger held open, which must remain closed until the animal is found; otherwise wild beasts will devour the animal.

**Magic and Magicians.** All this belongs to magic. In Persia after a time the magic art became so important that the priests who practised it were called Magians, or Magi. The Magi were the wise men of the East skilled in enchant-

ment. In the course of time magicians became prevalent everywhere.

The fundamental belief of the magicians was that there is a sympathetic influence between things that are alike. For example, an enemy could be made to suffer by inflicting wounds upon his wax image. So the weather man or "rain-maker" of Torres Straits would stop the rain by putting red paint on the top of his head to represent the shining sun. A Bavarian will sometimes wear a golden ring when sowing that the corn may have a golden color. People believed also in what is known as contagious magic, and anything that had once belonged to a person or touched him could be used by a magician to influence him. In Prussia there is a tradition that the next best thing to catching a thief is getting hold of a garment he has dropped, for if it is given a hard beating the thief will fall sick. There is a world-wide superstition that by injuring a person's footprints one can injure the person himself. A name was considered a very part of the living being, therefore the utterance of names had great efficacy. Spirits were influenced by them and passwords, spells, and magic words became prevalent. A science of occult secrets arose which only the initiated might understand. This is called sorcery. In Ireland a sorcerer would stand on one foot, stretch out one arm, shut one eye, and loudly chant an incantation. These poetical incantations were full of such biting satire that they would blight crops, dry up milch cows, or even raise an ulcerous blister on a person's face. Magic seems to have had a fascination for all ages. Even such highly cultured civilizations as Greece and Rome were filled with it. Nero accepted invitations to magic feasts. Many emperors, even the high-minded Marcus Aurelius, sanctioned it. Alexander Severus gave it official support. Its influence extended far down into the Christian era.

**Witchcraft.** Magicians, medicine-men, sorcerers, wizards, wise women, witches, are all specialists in the magic art, but the witch early became so celebrated and the belief in witchcraft has played such a part in history and literature that this cult needs special mention. Among primitive peoples the witch was

a person who possessed some sort of supernatural gift which could be used to injure the possessions of other people. Later witches were supposed to enter into a compact with the devil, often signing the agreement with their own blood or having the devil write their names in his "black book." Women for some reason were the ones usually suspected of being thus in league with the devil. The witch accordingly became a very important person, one to be feared in a community and either consulted or persecuted according to whether she had pleased or injured the parties interested. If, for example, an article of clothing belonging to another person should fall into the witch's hands, people believed she could cause that person untold suffering. Anything that belonged to him could thus be used against him in her hands, his hair or even his nail-parings. In the famous Salem witchcraft delusion suspects were charged with having in their possession handkerchiefs or small articles belonging to the afflicted children. A witch was supposed to be able to change herself into all sorts of shapes, that of a black cat or a toad, for instance, or a rat, fox, or lizard.

**Survivals of Witchcraft.** This belief in witches, by some called "the tragedy of humanity," was one of the earliest delusions that took hold of man's imagination and it has been one of the last to leave him. So late as the thirteenth century A.D. there were so many meetings held where the devil was supposed to appear as a toad or a ghost or a black cat that Pope Gregory IX issued a bull calling for civil punishment upon all found at such gatherings. In 1603 the Church of England declared its belief in such practices by issuing a law forbidding any minister to attempt to expel a devil without first obtaining a license from his bishop. From our own early colonial records it is quite evident that such estimable men as Cotton Mather and William Penn believed in witches, and between the years 1646 and 1688 twelve persons were executed for witchcraft in New England. The Salem witchcraft delusion of 1692 is one of the strangest and saddest episodes in American history. Many perfectly innocent women had their reputation taken from them and their lives made miserable by the most persistent persecu-

tion. Fifty-five persons were tortured to extract confessions from them and twenty were put to death. In England and Scotland about this time the burning of witches had become a dreadful epidemic. The last victim in England was executed in 1716 and in Scotland in 1722. In the East, even in modern times, witches are tried by water. When a person has supposedly been injured by enchantment he causes all the women suspected of witchcraft to assemble on the seashore or around a deep pool. He then ties stones to their backs and throws them into the water, which is a sacred element. A woman who does not sink is considered guilty, because the holy water spurns an unholy person. In various places in Europe different days were appointed for an annual clearing out of the witches, at which times the witches are supposed to be especially active. In the Tyrol there is a general house-cleaning and fumigation on the last three days of April, and on May-day occurs a ceremony called "Burning Out the Witches." It begins in the evening, when as much racket as possible is made by boys and dogs. As soon as the church bell rings bundles of twigs that have been fastened to poles are set on fire and women carry about censors of burning incense, dinner bells are rung and pots and pans are drummed, and amid such a din every one is screaming as loudly as possible:

> Witch flee, from here do flee,
> Or it will go ill with thee.

The final scene in the celebration is to run seven times around the house, yard, and village. By that time the witches are considered to be smoked out and driven away.

Our own custom of celebrating Hallowe'en is based upon the old belief that on the night which marks the transition from autumn to winter ghosts revisited their old homes, warmed themselves by the fire, and partook of the good cheer provided for them in the kitchen. They were shivering and hungry and appreciated such attentions. After a while this night became a special night for witches as well as ghosts. In some of the islands of Scotland there is a saying:

Hallowe'en will come, will come,
Witchcraft will be set agoing.

Literature is full of allusions to witchcraft. Every one is familiar with Shakespeare's lines in Hamlet:

'Tis now the very witching time of night
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world,

and with the picture of the witches' scene in Macbeth:

Round about the caldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw,
. . . . .
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

# CHAPTER X

## PRIMITIVE METHODS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE GODS

**Divination.** Divination was an art practised from very early times. It is the attempt to discover the will of the gods, to find out what is going to happen in the future or what course of action should be followed. In order to extract this information from the gods certain objects were employed or phenomena observed which were thought to possess supernatural qualities. In process of time the persons who could use these objects or interpret these phenomena with success were called diviners. It was very natural for people who thought there was a spirit in every tree and stream to imagine that the rustling of the leaves and the babbling of a brook were the voices of the spirits, and that if one could rightly interpret them he would be very wise. Certain people were supposed to be endowed by nature with the gift of interpreting signs or omens. Signs were often seen in the shapes and motions of the clouds. The word omen comes from the Latin *osmen*, meaning what proceeds from the *os*, or mouth, therefore a voice or something to be heard. An augury was much the same thing. The derivation of the word is obscure, but it is perhaps connected with the Latin *avis*, meaning a bird, and *garrire*, to chatter, and was applied not simply to the chattering of the birds but more especially to their flight, for wise people could see portents in the flight of birds. Soothsayer is the Anglo-Saxon word for diviner. It indicates the person who tells the truth, or "sooth," about the future. Sometimes the soothsayer or diviner, in order to come into more immediate contact with the gods, would work himself up into a state of ecstasy and would then utter words that could be understood only by special interpretation. This was supposed to be the god's voice speaking through him.

The word ecstasy comes from the Greek *ekstasis*, which means the act of putting aside or displacing something. The spirit of the man was thought to be displaced for the time being by the spirit of the divinity, and therefore an ecstatic condition came to signify possession by the spirits. We speak to-day of people being "possessed" when they act strangely. Necromancy, or the consultation of the spirits of the dead, was also practised. This word is compounded of *nekros*, a dead person, and *mantis*, a diviner. This custom has come down to us in the form of spiritualism.

**Reading Signs in Livers of Animals.** One of the oldest and most universal methods of telling the future was by reading the signs contained in the liver of a sacrificed animal. The liver was for a long time considered to be the seat of the soul because of its bloody appearance, for life was identified with the blood. Now, if a sacrifice was acceptable to a deity the "soul" of the animal was supposed to come into harmony with the "soul" of the god, and therefore the seat of the soul, or the liver, would reflect the mind of the god. If one who understood such occult matters could read the signs contained he would then be able to prognosticate the future. This method of divination was employed in Babylonia very early. One of the most frequently used names for a priest was *bārū*, meaning an inspector, because the priest was the inspector of livers. The priests learned much about this organ; they had names for its various lobes as well as the gall, the bladder, and the ducts, and observed its functions so carefully that their study is thought to be the basis for the real scientific study of anatomy, just as astrology was the basis for the science of astronomy. From Babylonia this method of divination passed to Greece and Rome, and played a most important part in the affairs of the nations. It was practised among the Incas of South America and still survives among some backward races in Borneo, Burma, and Uganda.

**Palmistry.** A similar superstition, remains of which are found in more highly developed civilizations, is palmistry or the reading of one's destiny by the lines of the hand. The

ancients thought if the design of the gods could be told by every fold and line of the liver of a sacrificial animal it might also be read in the lines of a man's hand. These could be much more easily examined and did not need such elaborate ceremonies to insure success; nevertheless, it was necessary that specially initiated persons should undertake it, and so we have the tradition of the wisdom of the gypsies in this occult science. Palmistry was known in China as early as 3000 B.C., and is still practised there and in India, Egypt, and Arabia.

**Dreams.** Dreams were most naturally supposed to be sent by the gods, and sometimes in order to induce them men would drink certain concoctions; if they slept upon a haunted spot their dreams were sure to have great portent. It is recorded in Assyrian history that once when the army of King Ashurbanipal was much afraid to cross a rushing stream the goddess Ishtar appeared in the night, saying, "I walk in front of Ashurbanipal," and the reassured army crossed the river next day unperturbed. In modern times the American Indians have had such faith in dreams that if a Cherokee dreamed he was bitten by a snake he would be treated upon awakening as if he had really been bitten. In Australia a whole tribe was known to decamp because one of them had a dream of a certain kind of owl, which was interpreted to mean that another tribe was about to attack them. In Kamchatka to dream of lice or dogs meant a visit of Russian travellers.

**Oracles.** Another method of foretelling the future and learning the will of the gods was connected with oracles. As time went on different deities were supposed to reveal themselves, especially at certain places. These became sacred spots called oracles, from the Latin word *oraculum*, an utterance. Shrines were set up at these places and special priests and priestesses administered the rites. These oracles became exceedingly important in the conduct of national affairs. There were several very famous ones in Greek and Roman history, such as the oracle of Zeus at Dodona, where the rustling of the sacred oaks was at first the means the god employed to show his purposes; the oracle at Cumæ, in Italy, where the spirits of the dead were

supposed to appear; and the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. Perhaps the Delphic oracle is the most famous of all. It was situated near Mount Parnassus, six miles inland from the Corinthian Gulf, in a very rugged and enchanting glen. Archæologists have discovered here the remains of many buildings, among them the noted temple to Apollo, within which the oracle was consulted. The prophetess or the Pythia would drink of the waters of a sacred spring, chew some of the leaves from the sacred laurel, and then seat herself upon a sacred tripod in the shrine of the temple. Presently she would fall into an ecstasy, or trance, and her ravings were interpreted by the priests as the voice of the god. So popular was this oracle that the order of consultation had to be determined by lot.

**Lots.** Still another method of determining the will of the gods was by casting lots. The word sorcerer originally meant a person who practised magic by means of the lot, or *sortes*. Later it came to signify one skilled in all kinds of occult practices. A special form of belief in the lot was in the use of books thought to be inspired. The custom was to open the book at random and the first passage upon which the eye fell would contain an omen. There are three books known to have been used in this way—Homer, Virgil, and the Bible. Sometimes passages were written upon slips of paper, placed in an urn, and shaken up. Then the first one taken out would contain the sign. This method of using the lot came to be an established institution, known as *Sortes Homericæ*, *Sortes Vergilianæ*, or *Sortes Biblicæ*. It was a custom used in England as late as the reign of Charles I, who is said to have consulted the *Sortes Vergilianæ* and to have found his fortune in the passage in the *Æneid* reading: "Let him fall before his day and unburied in the sand." [1] What is known as the "Ordeal," or an attempt to discover a guilty person by divine indications, was practised during the Middle Ages in the following way: A key was loosely fastened to the Bible at Psalm 50 : 18, which reads: "When thou sawest a thief thou consentedest with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." The Bible was then made to revolve

[1] *Æneid*, IV, 615–621.

while the names of those who were suspected of the crime were mentioned one after another. The name at which the book stopped revolving was that of the guilty person. This method of trial is known to have been employed in a case in London as late as 1867.[1]

**Astrology.** Astrology, or the study of the stars for the purpose of revealing human destiny, was one of the oldest methods for discovering the intentions of the heavenly powers. There is a very lofty mysteriousness about the skies at night. The great distance of the heavenly bodies, their brightness and their movements, have been a source of age-long fascination to the human mind. The stars can easily be imagined to be the eyes of heaven looking down upon us. Adults as well as children still exclaim over "falling stars." The "Milky Way" throws its spell over the star-gazer, even as it did when the ancients thought it to be the road to the palace of the gods. The "Northern Lights" are as splendidly bewitching now as when they were imagined to be the dance of the gods across the heavens. It was no wonder that the ancients imagined the starry heavens to be the home of the gods, from whose heights they controlled the affairs of the universe. It was in Babylonia that astrology was first developed. Those ancient people early noticed that a few stars were fixed while the rest moved around them. The fixed stars they associated with their principal deities; thus the largest planet naturally became the home of the most important god, Marduk, whose name was changed by the Greeks and Romans to Jupiter; the star of the evening was Ishtar, our Venus; the red planet became associated with the god of war. The astrologers made diagrams of the heavens, especially of that portion known as the zodiac, which contained the sun and moon and planets as they saw them. This embraced the twelve constellations, which they pictured as animals. The sun and the moon were among the first objects to be worshipped in Babylonia, as well as Ishtar, the goddess of

[1] See *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, article "Divination." Also Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, London, 1877, vol. III, p. 353, under "Divination, by Sieve and Shears," for instances of this superstitious practice as late as 1832.

fruitfulness. The Sun and Moon and Venus were therefore conceived to be in control of the zodiac, of light and darkness, cold and heat, life and death. The moon-god, sun-god, and the gods of the five planets which they first recognized (our Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mercury, and Mars) were most important in arranging the affairs of men. Their activities were manifest in the movements of the stars. If, therefore, a person could read those movements he would be able to see what the gods were doing and could disclose their will to others.

**Uses of Astrology.** The astrologer thus became a most important member of society. At first he was inquired of concerning public affairs only. Such questions as the following were asked of him: On what day should the king set out on a military campaign? On what day should the foundation of a temple or palace be laid? Tablets have been found upon which were written the reports of astrologers to the king, as, for example, this one:

> On the fifteenth day the sun and moon are seen together,
> A powerful enemy raises his weapons against the land,
> The enemy will smash the great gate of the city.

Or this one:

> The moon is seen out of season,
> Crops will be small.

An eclipse was supposed to be an especial portent of evil. It had a special meaning for each day upon which it might occur. For example:

> An eclipse happening upon the twentieth day; storms set in and famine; afterwards for a year storms destroy property.

One tablet has to do with Venus, her disappearance as evening star and reappearance as morning star. When this occurred on the tenth day of the ninth month there would be a shortage of corn and hay. From these simpler observations there grew up a much more elaborate system of foretelling the

fruitfulness. It was not until a very much later time, however, that application was made to the destinies of private individuals. A person's horoscope was then observed at the moment of his birth and his fate announced. To "cast a horoscope" meant to draw a diagram of the stars at the moment a child was born. This delusion became a respected branch of philosophy and was recognized as such even in seventeenth-century England. There are still superstitious relics of this primitive science; for example, the classic precept to set eggs under a hen at new moon and the following old-fashioned lines:

> Sowe peason and beans in the wane of the moone;
> Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soone.

Thus we see in magic, witchcraft, divination, and astrology definite attempts to find out the will of the gods and to manage the spirits so that results might be brought about pleasing to the human mind.

**Taboo.** There were two other forms of treating with the gods, namely, taboo and sacrifice. These were originally simple methods of showing reverence, but they grew into something much more elaborate as time went on. Taboo is a very ancient practice which manifested itself in many strange ways. The word is taken from the Polynesian language and means "strongly marked or named." It meant originally that some object was marked as sacred and therefore was forbidden to be touched, but it came to apply to customs as well as objects. The "thou shalt not" became very prominent in early religions. It was thought that the sanctuary was the property of the gods as well as everything in it and that unholy persons should therefore not enter it nor touch sacred utensils. Orders of priests arose who were especially set apart for the service of sanctuaries and who were dressed differently from the rest of the people. Others might not enter the sacred areas nor perform the sacred rites; if they did enter they must remove their shoes as a token of respect. During sacred seasons or on sacred days ordinary pursuits must be avoided. Blood was

identified with the life of the spirit; therefore if an animal was killed his blood should not be drunk. By association of ideas the color red became sacred in some places. In Africa red earth might not be trodden on. In Japan red is used to paint holy places. A corpse was unholy and everything that a corpse touched became unholy by contact. Therefore one should not touch a corpse, and if obliged to do so must undergo special purifying ceremonies afterward. The chief of a tribe stood as a representative of the god; therefore the food placed before him should not be eaten by common people. Often the very name of a god or of a chief was forbidden to be used and another not so sacred was employed instead. Taboo has been developed to the greatest extent in Polynesia, from whence it receives its name. If a Polynesian chief enters a house or steps into a canoe it belongs to him. Traces of this feeling that certain objects are too sacred to use or to touch are found all over the world. Not so very long ago it was the custom in Japan to take especial care of the nail-parings of the Emperor, lest some one should touch them and thus bring misfortune upon himself. Sometimes the hair of sacred persons must remain uncut and flesh be abstained from as food for stated times. Thus the taboo might occasionally be removed in due time. It was natural that members of a tribe should be forbidden to kill a totem animal or a clansman and that the offender should be punished by death. In many cases of taboo if an offense had been committed unwittingly there were means of purification offered. Water and fire were used most frequently, but very strange customs grew up among primitive peoples. Among some of the South African tribes it has been the rule to cleanse a man who has been wounded or who has killed an enemy by making him drink a decoction of the gall and intestines of an ox boiled with roots. He must gulp down three swallows and have the rest sprinkled upon his body. Thus many superstitious practices are directly traceable to the original feeling of reverence for sacred objects.

**Sacrifice.** Another quite universal method of approaching the deity was through sacrifice. We have associated with this

word in modern times the idea of self-denial, of giving up something precious to ourselves, and of the pain and reluctance which accompany such a sense of duty. But these later feelings have perhaps superseded the original significance. Some scholars think that in primitive times men made a festal meal and sacrificed an animal in order that there might be fellowship between gods and men. This, indeed, is a lofty idea that remains with us to-day, that it is possible to have communion of soul with the divine and that it behooves men to cultivate the means for such communion. Since in ancient times there was a belief in kinship between all spirits, and the best way men knew of having fellowship with their friends was at a meal, it was not strange that this idea should be transferred to their relationship with the gods. Gods and men thus shared a common life. Moreover, since they thought they must supply nourishment for the dead, why not for the gods as well? A spirit could, of course, partake only of the essence or soul of food, which was carried up to him by means of smoke, while the worshippers consumed the visible portions. The fragrance of burning incense was also agreeable to the gods. Religious expression in its earlier stages seems to have been a cheerful matter, accompanied by music and dancing and a joyous spirit, even hilarity. There was much familiar intercourse between spirits human and divine. Dread and awe and the feeling of separation and distance from the deity seems to have developed later. Relationship was a matter of blood, therefore it was necessary to present a slain animal. Later the blood as the symbol of life was sacred to the gods. This was doubtless one of the ideas underlying the rite of sacrifice by which men sought to establish a close relationship with the heavenly beings, although it may not have been the very first idea.

Without question, early man thought the gods would be pleased with gifts. They wished to honor their deities by bringing of their best, whether of the fruits of the land or the choicest of the flock. The common Hebrew word for sacrifice means "a gift." This was true among other ancient nations also. They thought that they could thus induce the gods to

be favorable when they wanted some especial blessing or to forgive them if they had done something contrary to the divine pleasure. They therefore brought their sin-offerings as well as their thank-offerings. The idea of an angry god who needed to be propitiated in order to accomplish an atonement, or literally to re-establish the at-one-ment with the god which was desirable, became a predominant feature.

**Human Sacrifice.** The barbarous custom of human sacrifice, especially of children, prevailed in some places. The idea beneath it was that children are the gift of the gods and that the best one has should be given back to them in gratitude. There was an old custom among German tribes, when famine overtook them, of offering a series of choice sacrifices, each one better than the last. If the famine did not cease the life of the chief was the noblest and best they could offer. Sometimes animals were offered as a substitute for men. In India it used to be the custom when human blood had been spilled on a recently sown field to make expiation by killing a chicken instead of a man.

**Vicarious Sacrifice.** The idea of a "scapegoat" took possession of people at an early date. One can hand over to another burdens that are too heavy for one's own back, why not hand over the burden of one's sin? This was the way the primitive man thought, and so he would transfer his own guilt to some animal and let him run away with it into the wilderness. This custom was found not long ago surviving among the South Africans. When a man became very sick a goat was brought to him; all the sins of the household were confessed over his back and he was turned out into the veldt. The man was then supposed to recover. Sometimes the transference was made to human beings. Among the Hindus, for example, there is a ritual for transferring the pangs of thirst from a sick man to another human being. And many races have had the custom of laying the sins of one person upon another. Thus the idea of vicarious suffering came into existence. Sacrifices were made for the individual and also for the entire community. The latter usually occurred at certain seasons of the year, in

the spring when the seed was sown or at harvest-time when the crops were gathered. If one man's crime had brought disaster upon the community he was sacrificed for the good of all. In this manner a very elaborate sacrificial ritual arose among all races.

Such were the conceptions of primitive man concerning the universe. The whole world to him was a religious world. Religion and life were wrapped up together; all his knowledge, even the beginnings of science and of philosophy, was religious knowledge. Gradually he attained a more systematic and orderly arrangement of thought that issued in certain fundamental conceptions which have been the basis of organized religions.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE PHILOSOPHIC BASIS OF EARLY THEOLOGY

When the great organized religions are examined they seem to reveal two fundamental thoughts. Either men regard the ultimate controlling powers of the universe as many or as all gathered under one head. The one belief leads to polytheism, many gods; the other to monotheism, one god. There is, however, an intermediate stage known as henotheism, or the belief that there are many gods but only one god supreme over each nation or tribe. We shall briefly consider these three basic principles.

**Polytheism.** Primitive man was greatly impressed by the powers of nature at work in the world, and in course of time he conceived these powers to be of the same kind as the power he possessed which is dependent upon spirit. The spirits of nature he then began to personify, attributing to them human characteristics. This is called the *anthropomorphic* conception, from two Greek words, *anthropos* and *morphē*, meaning after the form of man. Images were then made to represent the gods, and these images were given human or animal forms and were worshipped. Thus at first there were many gods of the sky, the sea, the trees and rocks, the animals moving about—a pure nature-worship; afterward there were representations made of these many gods in the form of idols supposed to represent the great powers, a worship involving idolatry. This constitutes polytheism, a name derived from the two Greek words, *polus*, many, and *theos*, god. But when there were many gods, since they possessed human characteristics of love and hate, jealousy, envy, and ambition, it was quite necessary to organize them into systematic relationships. Some were more powerful than others, some antedated others in their origin, some championed one cause, others another. And so there came to be what is

known as a *pantheon* of gods, from the Greek word, *pantheion*, which means a temple dedicated to all the gods. This came to signify the whole galaxy of deities worshipped by any one nation. Let us trace the rise of some of these systematized conceptions of polytheism.

**Nature-Worship.** The moon was one of man's first guides. He first began to reckon time by the moon's phases. In many languages the name for month and moon are the same and the week indicated a quarter of the moon's travels. Its changes from night to night are so obvious that he soon obtained the notion that the waxing and the waning moon had much to do with seasons and with the growth of plants. Moreover, man falsely associated the appearance of the dew which refreshed the parched earth with the moon. In warm countries where nomadic people often travel by night the moon was their guide to show the way and their protector from evil beasts. It was quite natural, therefore, that when the early inhabitants settled in Babylonia they should take the spirit of the moon as their chief deity, whom they worshipped most reverently. Thus we find that one of the oldest of Babylonian cities, Ur of the Chaldees, was a moon-god city. There they had a temple erected with three platforms, called a *ziggurat*, or stage-tower. The name originally meant a mountain peak. Another name indicated "house of light." This tower was in the form of a right-angled parallelogram. Each platform was smaller than the one below it, and on the very top was a little sacred chamber supposed to be for the occupation of the deity. The priests ascended these platforms at night, as if ascending to heaven, and at the top performed sacred rites in honor of the moon-god, Sin.

But as people became more experienced as agriculturalists the sun was found to be their special benefactor; sunshine was essential to crops and prosperity, and the sun became one of the chief gods. The sun was thought to be the offspring of the moon, for the Babylonians had their own theory of evolution, which was that less perfect beings brought forth the more perfect. This theory is shown in their idea that day springs

from night and therefore begins at evening instead of morning. Larsa was the special city for the worship of the sun-god, Shamash. The lord of all heaven was Anu, the sky-god; Bel was the god of earth; Ea the god of waters. This was a very early triad. Ishtar, at first the spirit of the evening star, became the goddess of fruitfulness. Ramman was the god of the atmosphere and controlled the clouds. He was supposed to be especially present in thunder and lightning. Nusku was the fire-god; Nergal was the god of battle; Ninib the god of the chase. There were many more also. The chief deities each had a city consecrated to his worship, with an order of priests and a ritual. The god to become most powerful in the end was Marduk, the local deity of the city of Babylon, a sun-god. His temple had seven platforms, each dedicated to one of the seven planets. He was one of the later ones to appear, but he won his way over the rest by superior prowess.

**Nature Myths.** These gods, moreover, had wives. Anatu was the wife of Anu and Bēlit the wife of Bel. Damkina was the wife of Ea and the mother of Marduk. But the most important goddess of all was Ishtar. One myth makes her the daughter of the moon. Thus the gods married, had children, and carried on their affairs on a large scale, much as men did on a small scale. Every once in a while they would have a quarrel with one another, and the one who was victorious would be supreme for the time being. Their respective places were well recognized and the different grades of honor due them. Of course, if the sun-god fought with the moon-god it meant that the men of Larsa fought with the men of Ur, and when Marduk became the supreme lord, Babylon was the capital of the whole country. Many mythical stories were associated with these gods, creation stories, a flood story, and various tales of the way the earth came to be what it is. Tablets have been discovered by archæologists relating these tales.

Such myths, however, are not peculiar to Babylonia. They are characteristic of all primitive peoples the world over. The Egyptians, Greeks, Norsemen, American Indians, all have them. It was the most natural way in which man's imagina-

tion could work at a certain stage in his development. Men recognized that the world had been changed from a chaotic state to one of order. They thought it had been accomplished by the gods, "the strong ones," who were therefore "lords" of the land. But it was for the most part a triumph of physical rather than spiritual power. It took them a long time to realize that the word "divine" ought to stand for spiritual strength.

**Ceremony and Ritual.** Of course a hierarchy, or government by the priests, was the first step in systematizing life and worship. Ceremony and ritual sprang up, which in course of time came to be regarded as absolutely essential to civilized life. This was developed in the larger centres, where the temples were situated. And so our words *heathen* and *pagan* originally meant the people from the heath or country districts, who did not know the proper customs nor how to behave as they should in the performance of religious ceremonies. A sabbath was instituted in Babylonia, that the hearts of the gods might rest from their troubles with men at least one day in seven. This was supposed to pacify them and make them more amiable for the rest of the week. Religious processions were also established and the gods were carried about in state in arks or ships made especially for the purpose. Politics were all bound up with religion. The kings were under the thumb of the priests. Whether it was a war or a good crop, all the blessings or calamities or victories were due to the gods. Human rulers were but the spokesmen of the deities.

**Life After Death.** In Babylonia religion centred very largely in the activities of the gods on earth. It was this life that concerned people especially. They believed in an existence after death, but it was unknown and of a very uncertain and forbidding character. Life in the shadowy underworld, where both good and bad were sent together, was looked forward to as something very sad and unsatisfying. Egyptian imagination, however, pictured life both here and hereafter very graphically. When in early days the herdsmen used to gaze up into the skies at night they saw there a magnificent cow. Her head was toward the west; the earth lay between her feet;

her belly was the arch of heaven studded with stars. The sun was the offspring of the night or of this great cow, born in the morning as a calf. A celestial bark awaited it to carry it across the sky, or else the sun, like the hawk who always accompanied it, flew across the heavens to the west. They thought there must be some way to get the sun back again to the east after it had sunk in the west at night; so they imagined a subterranean stream which received the celestial bark at sunset. This boat carried with it night by night the spirits of men who had died, and since they disappeared in the west the name for the departed was "the westerners." Those who had passed on before awaited in the nether world the arrival of this precious boat. There was another boat, also, presided over by a ferryman, who would take into his craft only those of whom it could be said "there is no evil which he has done." This is the beginning, so far as is known, of an ethical standard for a happy life in the next world. And so we find in Egypt that the great objects of worship were a cow or a golden calf or the sun's disk represented with the wings of a flying hawk. The cow, Hathor, was the Lady of Heaven. Rē was at first the supreme sun-god, represented by the sun's disk. There were litanies to be sung as he approached the underworld at night. He was finally overcome by Osiris, the god of the underworld, who became lord of the earth. His wife was Isis and their son was Horus, another sun-god. Thus we have the great Egyptian triad, Osiris, Isis, and Horus. The figures of these gods were those of animals or human forms with some characteristics of animals attached. Osiris was often represented as a bull, Isis as a cow or a woman with cow's horns. Horus had a hawk's head. Ptah was the god of the artificer. Architects and craftsmen of all sorts went to him with their plans. Ptah's workshop was at first the temple at Memphis, but afterward the world was his workshop and he the master workman. His high priest was the chief artist of the kingdom. This powerful god was worshipped under the form of Apis, the bull. Much of this ancient philosophy concerning the origin of the world and the gods who were supposed to govern its affairs was taken

over by younger races from the older Egyptian and Babylonian belief. The history of Greece and Rome, Phœnicia and the Hebrews, all afford examples of this. Europe adopted from Persia the worship of an ancient sun-god, Mithra, represented as a bull, remains of whose monuments and temples have been found even as far west as France.

**Universality of Nature Myths.** Sun-worship has by no means been confined to Eastern races. In South America there are still standing the walls of the great Sun Temple of the Incas decorated with plates of gold. They have a myth that for a very long time there was darkness over the earth and men were very melancholy, until suddenly the sun rose out of the Sacred Rock which stands by Lake Titicaca. This was always afterward a holy place. In a village near there were standing the gilded and silvered figures of the sun and moon. The moon was considered the wife of the sun, and the footprints of the sun-god and the moon-goddess in the rock are still shown to visitors. Excavation has brought to light golden figures of the gods and of the llama, which was as sacred to them as the bull was to the Egyptians. A whole elaborate system of sun-worship was in operation in Peru at the time of the Spanish invasion of the sixteenth century A.D. This worship included also a special reverence of the Pleiades, similar to the reverence shown them in the East.

**Henotheism.** Thus polytheism was a world-wide belief for ages, issuing in very elaborate systems of established religion. It was an easy step from polytheism to henotheism. The word is made up of the two Greek words, *henos* and *theos*, meaning one deity supreme among many. A nation or tribe believed there were many gods in existence, a sun-god, moon-god, god of the waters, god of battle; but one special tribe would regard the sun-god or the god of battle as the only one they had anything in particular to do with. At first if the people of the sun-god city were overcome by the warriors of the god of battle, then they must change gods, saying good-by to the sun-god for the time being. But after a while one god conquered so many cities and was supreme over all for so long a time that

he became the permanent head of that nation. The people then looked upon the gods of other nations as real gods indeed, to be feared, but not to be worshipped by them or ever to be considered as offering them protection, for their own god was theirs forever, having perpetual control of their affairs, their absolute sovereign for all time.

**Monotheism.** From this sprang monotheism, or the belief that there is only one god and that all the rest are false gods, no gods at all. The name is compounded from *monos*, single, and *theos*, god. A single god in all the world to be worshipped by every one is the idea. But this is a much later development than polytheism or the earliest forms of henotheism. It involved a very cosmopolitan conception of the world in which men live. Men to-day are said to be provincial when they cannot think in world terms, but always bound their thinking by the lines which enclose their particular province. If it is hard for uneducated people to-day to escape provincialism and to think of the whole world instead of their little corner of it, how much more natural was such a narrow and circumscribed vision for ancient peoples. They knew there were other tribes and races to whom they conceded equal privileges with themselves, among them the right to have gods and to worship them, but they had enough to think of in serving their own gods according to the rules prescribed without widening their religious circle and letting in foreign peoples with foreign ideas. Henotheism was a protest against the complex relationships of polytheism, and from this it was but a step for a nation to regard their god as supreme, not only over their little section of the world, but everywhere. And if he was superior everywhere then he ought by rights to be worshipped everywhere and by all.

**First Appearance of the Monotheistic Idea.** There are glimmerings of this monotheistic conception in the history of Babylon and possibly in other primitive races. In Egypt, however, there was a decided move taken in this direction by the Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV, who for a short period revolutionized the religion of the whole kingdom by forbidding the wor-

ship of any god but Aton, the sun-god. He changed his own name to Ikhn-aton, the spirit of Aton, to denote the complete revolution. It was the creative energy that proceeded from the sun that he worshipped, the creative energy which covered the whole earth with his power, omnipotent in every sense, the only god whom any one needed to worship. This man was a religious genius in the loftiness of his conceptions compared with the prevalent idolatry of his time. Some of the hymns he wrote to "the living Aton, Beginning of Life," are very beautiful, comparable with the Psalms of the Bible. Some of their expressions are quite similar, such, for example, as "How manifold are all thy works," "O thou sole god beside whom there is no other." He is called "the most remarkable figure in early Oriental history, or, indeed, in the history of the world before the Hebrews," "the world's first idealist." But Amenhotep's vision lasted scarcely a generation. His successor was soon forced by the priests to return to the orthodox faith of the day, the old polytheism of their fathers. Another religious genius, the Persian Zoroaster, is thought to have started a monotheistic faith in the sixth century B.C. According to his teaching, Ahura Mazda, the god of light, who sets before men right and wrong, life and death, truth and falsehood, is the only god worth worshipping, he who sees everything and knows everything, and if a foreigner obeys the truth even he can be saved. There are other beings worshipped as gods, but they are false, evil spirits, deluding men rather than guiding them aright. Fire became sacred as the element of light and purity, and thus Zoroastrianism became synonymous with fire-worship. Zoroaster, or Zarathustra, was indeed a man of prophetic genius, but after his death the Persian religion fell back by degrees to the more popular polytheistic belief.

All the gropings that men made after a monotheistic faith that would last seem to have failed until the Hebrews, with their superior prophetic gift, grasped by degrees the lofty conception of the one true and only God, a spiritual God, whose requirements of man are ethical rather than ceremonial, and moral in the purest sense. From this source sprang Christian-

ity with Mohammedanism closely related. These three have been the only great organized monotheistic religions of the world. To trace the rise of such a high-minded faith is one of the fascinating tasks of the Bible student.

# CHAPTER XII

## TRACES OF PRIMITIVE BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS IN THE BIBLE

**The Bible a Record of Development.** The Bible shows step by step the way in which a great idea was revealed. It is therefore quite out of place for us to expect to find at the beginning of Hebrew history the fine fruit which appears later. Consequently we must approach the Bible with discriminating eyes. It used to be the habit of some to regard all portions as applicable to present-day needs, containing a message of spiritual import for us to-day. But to the modern student this seems quite irrational except in the sense that God shows us what to avoid by looking at the progressive stages through which man has already passed. For example, the barbarisms of the book of Judges belong to a very crude stage of society, and when Deborah's Song is read, interesting and beautiful as it is as a spirited battle ode and as the earliest bit of literature in the Bible, the final ringing charge, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Yahweh," cannot be considered applicable to us, for with our greater enlightenment we would consider it brutal and inhuman if a woman should slay a man in the manner Jael put an end to Sisera. There are, indeed, great spiritual lessons in the poem; the bravery and courage of Deborah, her faith in God, her scorn of the weak and cowardly selfishness exhibited by certain tribes, all this is inspiring in any age. And it is this high-minded element running throughout the Bible that has made it a book truly inspired for our guidance.

**The Prophetic Climax.** This prophetic insight into spiritual things found its climax in the great prophets and in Jesus, who was one with them in spirit. They presented a God of such purity and such spiritual strength, demanding such clear-cut ethical standards of conduct, that their messages have not

yet been lived up to, and where they have been most closely followed the best conditions of society have been found. All the more wonderful does this clear, shining light of the truth seem to us when we come to realize the superstitious beliefs of all contemporary nations. It is not surprising that some of these beliefs and practices clung to the Hebrews for a long period, for they have clung to men of all races and ages. The great work of the prophets was to teach the people the difference between the essential and the non-essential, the ethical and the purely ceremonial, the real and the false aspects of religion. This, indeed, is still the great office of the Bible. In order, however, that it may have this effect upon us of the present day we need to discern some of the steps through which the Hebrew people passed in giving birth to this prophetic light.

Did the three primitive forms of religious belief—animism, fetichism, and ancestor-worship—crop out in the history of the Hebrews?

**Animistic Tendencies.** Without question animistic tendencies are to be found in the Old Testament, although by the time the Hebrews had settled down to write any history of themselves their religion had assumed a much higher form. With them many of the traditions of the past were carried over, as always happens in the history of any nation. The leaders in thought are always ahead of the practices of the masses of the people. We find in the stories handed down of the earliest times that certain stones and trees were held in reverence, as, for example, the stone pillars Jacob set up and anointed with oil.[1] This doubtless goes back to the old belief that a divine spirit could take a stone for his dwelling-place and to the custom of pouring oil over such stones as a token of reverence. Rows and circles of stone pillars have been found by the archæologists, some of which go back to the days before the Hebrews ever came to the land, when animism was a common faith. It was not strange that the uneducated Israelites should continue the religious customs of their neighbors. But in later records we find very definite prohibitions against the worship of such

[1] Gen. 28 : 18; 31 : 45; 35 : 14.

objects, as, for example, in Deuteronomy, where the people are commanded to "break down and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire." [1] The Asherim were sacred posts driven into the ground where no trees would grow and were found around heathen shrines. The Old Testament often mentions them as a snare to the Hebrews in their struggle to establish the right kind of worship. These stone pillars and wooden posts were the "stocks and stones," the worship of which the prophets protested against.[2] The oak-tree seems to have been especially sacred, for we are told that Yahweh appeared unto Abraham "by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day," [3] and that the angel that appeared to Gideon sat under an oak.[4] In the book of Kings when a certain "man of God" was sought for he was found sitting under an oak.[5] At the sanctuary of Shechem there was an oak,[6] and we are told that the people often burned incense under oaks.[7] When David was once attacking the Philistines he waited to hear "the sound of marching in the mulberry-trees," which was probably because of the ancient belief that the gods revealed themselves in the whisperings of the trees.[8] But the prophets denounced tree-worship, telling the people that in their right minds they would "be ashamed of the oaks." [9]

**Good and Evil Spirits.** The early Hebrews believed there were hosts of spirits in God's heavenly courts, all of whom he used for his purposes.[10] The good angels were his special ministers, but bad spirits, too, were sometimes his agents, like the lying spirits he is said to have made use of in the book of Kings.[11] They represented God as having sons, and the sons of God married the daughters of men and had children by them.[12] They thought there were demons as did other Semites. The

[1] Deut. 12 : 3; *cf.* Hosea 3 : 4.

[2] Isaiah 44 : 19; Ezek. 20 : 32. This phrase was used by Chaucer in referring to this kind of worship:

> And those made thee forsake thy God,
> And worship stocks and stones.
>
> —*Wanton Wife of Bath.*

[3] Gen. 18 : 1. [4] Judges 6 : 11 *f.* [5] I Kings 13 : 14.
[6] Joshua 24 : 26. [7] Hosea 4 : 13. [8] II Sam. 5 : 24.
[9] Isaiah 1 : 29. [10] I Kings 22 : 19–23. [11] I Kings 22 : 23.
[12] Gen. 6 : 1–4.

"he-goats" mentioned in Leviticus 17 : 7 were goatlike desert demons resembling the Greek satyrs. The "night-monster" spoken of in Isaiah was probably something like the Arabian jinn.[1] An evil spirit took possession of Saul when David was called in to play before him.[2] The tempter came to Eve in the form of a serpent, that universal symbol of evil. They imagined there was a great creature in the sea called leviathan, a sort of celestial dragon, which opposed the efforts of the beneficent powers. In Isaiah he is called "leviathan, the gliding serpent," and "leviathan, the crooked serpent." [3] In the New Testament Satan is called Beelzebub, who was an old god of Palestine.[4] They believed in the "evil eye," at least in earlier times, for there are a number of references to it in the Bible, and the Hebrew word meaning *envy* also signifies the "evil eye." [5]

**Sacred Waters.** The Hebrews also reverenced sacred waters. In the Old Testament there are a number of references to sacred wells and one very old folk-song called "The Song of the Well," which they sang when gathered about such spots.[6] The gospel of John describes the pool of Bethesda as a place where they brought all kinds of sick people, besides the blind, the lame, and the withered, to wait for the troubling of the water.[7] When Elisha bade Naaman, the leper, go and wash in the Jordan River the prophet employed a means of cure familiar to Eastern people from ancient Babylonian times, when they dipped themselves in the sacred Euphrates to be cleansed of disease. But the faith demanded of Naaman was faith in the God of the Jordan, who was a different one from the god of the Abarna or the Pharpar or the Euphrates. We learn from the account that Naaman after his cure still felt he must give recognition to Rimmon,[8] the Syrian god of the thunder-storm, although he was really converted to Yahweh, the God of the Israelites.[9]

[1] Isaiah 34 : 14.
[2] I Sam. 16 : 23.
[3] Isaiah 27 : 1; *cf.* Psalms 74 : 14.
[4] Matt. 12 : 24.
[5] *Cf.* Deut. 28 : 54, 56; Isaiah 13 : 18; Prov. 23 : 6; 28 : 22.
[6] Num. 21 : 17, 18.
[7] John 5 : 2–7.
[8] The same as the Babylonian Ramman. See Chapter VI, p. 3.
[9] II Kings 5.

**Sacred Mountains.** Many mountains were held as sacred. Mount Sinai and Mount Zion were thought to be the especial abodes of Yahweh. It was a custom of the whole region to reverence "high places," and on the top of almost every mountain and hill a shrine would be set up. Some of these "high places" were very lofty, as the famous one at Petra, which must have been sought out largely because of its magnificent view and the feeling it gives of nearness to the heavens. It was not strange that the Hebrews adopted this custom of the land, and, as we shall see, the greatest thoughts of the prophets were inspired in the mountains away from the enticements of the plain. Yet they inveighed against the heathen worship that was carried on at many of the "high places," which was a relic of a very superstitious, animistic faith.[1]

**Traces of Fetichism.** There are traces of fetichism, likewise, in many of their customs. It crops out most decidedly in the New Testament in the account of Paul's stay at Ephesus, where both Jews and Greeks were so impressed by his powers of healing that handkerchiefs or some article that had touched his person were carried to the sick that the diseases and evil spirits might thus be induced to disappear.[2] The ark which the Israelites carried about with them, because they felt that its presence would insure success in battle, received fetich-like reverence.[3] Archæologists have found numerous amulets which were worn by the Canaanites and Israelites.

**The Blood Covenant.** Reverence for the teraphim[4] or protecting spirits of the household is the nearest to totemism of anything in the Bible. It was perhaps closely allied to ancestor-worship, for the teraphim were evidently figurines, small figures of terra-cotta or metal, like the Roman Lares and Penates. Some scholars have thought that the fact that many of the Hebrew names indicated some animal was a sign of totemism, as, for example, Caleb, meaning dog, and Rachel, lamb. The whole tribe of the Calebites would then be the dog tribe and the ewe lamb would be the clan symbol for the northern

[1] *Cf.* Hosea 4 : 13; II Kings 23 : 8–13.
[2] Acts 19 : 11, 12.
[3] I Sam. 4 : 3–6; Deut. 10 : 5.
[4] Gen. 31 : 19; Judges 17 : 5.

tribes that recognized Rachel as their tribal mother. But it is not certain that any of the Semites were given to totemism in its strict sense. The blood covenant, however, was one of their institutions, and it is still extant in Arabia and the Lebanon region. There are indications of it among the Hebrews. They thought with all ancient peoples that the blood was the seat of life;[1] the sprinkling of the blood of a sacrificial animal upon the people sealed their covenant with God. This blood was called "the blood of the covenant," [2] and Jesus used this old belief as a symbol of the establishment of the bond of spiritual kinship when he took the wine and told his disciples all to drink of it with him as representing his blood or his life.[3] A covenant of friendship could be sealed also by exchanging garments, as was done among other peoples. Jonathan thus sealed his covenant with David.[4] When Aaron the priest was about to die his garments were stripped from him and placed upon his son and successor, Eleazar.[5] When Elijah called Elisha from his farming to become a prophet like himself he threw his mantle over him.[6] When the Great Prophet of the Exile was portraying the new and everlasting covenant which God would make with his people he used the vivid figure of speech which they would all understand: "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." [7] Many of the beautiful symbols and symbolic expressions which we find in the Bible draw their figures if not their significance from such primitive beliefs.

**Magic, Witchcraft, Divination, Astrology.** When we come to inquire how much of magic, witchcraft, divination, and astrology was commonly believed in among the Hebrews we find a great deal, even down into later times, when on the whole their religion had far outstripped that of other nations in its ethical idealism. Aaron's magic rod and the whole account of the way in which Moses succeeded in working upon the superstitious Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus is a demonstration

[1] Lev. 17 : 11.
[2] Ex. 24 : 8; Zech. 9 : 11; Heb. 9 : 19–20.
[3] Matt. 26 : 27.
[4] I Sam. 18 : 3 *f.*
[5] Num. 20 : 25–26.
[6] I Kings 19 : 19.
[7] Isaiah 61 : 8–10.

of the use of magic.[1] Their belief in witchcraft is pictured when Saul consulted the witch of Endor.[2] Their approval of divination is manifest in many ways, for example, in the use of what they called "the Urim and Thummim" in obtaining a divine oracle. These were probably stones which the priest carried in a bag, or ephod, which he shook, thus making them jump out.[3] This was an application of the use of the lot, and a belief in the lot is carried over even into the New Testament.[4] The book of Ezekiel tells how the king of Babylon divined against Jerusalem by shaking arrows to and fro, consulting the teraphim, and looking into the livers of animals.[5] The attitude of the Israelites, on the other hand, toward divining by means of liver inspection is shown in the fact that the ritual connected with their most common sacrifice required the liver to be burned with the rest of the animal.[6] Dreams were considered of great import. The dreams that Joseph and Daniel interpreted are examples.[7] We are told that Solomon sought "the great high place" at Gibeon, and there Yahweh appeared to him in a dream by night.[8] Ecstatic states and trances were considered an accompaniment of divine revelation.[9] Signs were constantly being looked for in any undertaking.[10] The sanctuary or the abode of a "seer" was sought as a place of inquiry or as an oracle.[11] The belief in ghosts and necromancy was common.[12] The astrologers or wise men of the East were respected and their wisdom sought after.[13] We are told that the Magi visited Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem.[14] The children of Israel quite frequently lapsed into sun and moon worship.[15] In the book of Job reference is made to kissing the hand to the moon, an old act of reverence.[16] But against most of these practices the Bible has much to say. There were many prohibitory laws and much strong sarcasm was used by the proph-

[1] Ex. 4 and 7. [2] I Sam. 28.
[3] Num. 27 : 21; Deut. 33 : 8; Ex. 28 : 30; Lev. 8 : 8; I Sam. 28 : 6.
[4] Acts 1 : 26. [5] Ezek. 21 : 21. [6] Lev. 1 : 3–9.
[7] Gen. 41 and Daniel 2. [8] I Kings 3 : 4, 5.
[9] I Sam. 19 : 24; Micah 1 : 8; *cf.* also Acts 10 : 10; 11 : 5.
[10] I Sam. 14 : 6–10. [11] Deut. 17 : 9; I Sam. 9 : 9.
[12] Lev. 20 : 27; I Sam. 28; II Chron. 33 : 6; Isaiah 29 : 4.
[13] Isaiah 47 : 13; Daniel 5 : 7; Gen. 41 : 8.
[14] Matt. 2. [15] II Kings 23 : 5, 11. [16] Job 31 : 27.

ets to prevent the people from trusting the diviner, the sorceress, the necromancer, and the witch.[1] The whole history of the prophets is a struggle to find a better way to guide the people.

**Taboo.** Taboo and sacrifice are customs also very strongly exhibited in the Bible. The drinking of blood was prohibited;[2] a corpse was defiling;[3] animals were divided into clean and unclean.[4] The Holy Place could only be entered by the priests who had a special dress.[5] The shewbread was to be eaten only by them.[6] The utensils of the temple were sacred.[7] Certain acts were forbidden on the Sabbath.[8] Moses was enjoined to take off his shoes on holy ground.[9] There were certain ceremonies for cleansing a defiled person.[10] One of the most striking prohibitions was in the use of the name of the deity. Ancient people often thought that the name of a deity was too sacred to pronounce, and this was true of the original name for God which the Hebrews had, *Yahweh.* They therefore substituted for it the word *Adonai,* translated Lord. When manuscripts were written out, in order to make it clear that the word *Adonai* was to be read in place of *Yahweh,* which was too sacred to pronounce, the vowels of *Adonai* were placed in the word *Yahweh.* A long time afterward the consonants of the original name and the vowels of the substitute were written as one word, *Jehovah,* but this did not occur until late in the Christian era, about the time of the Reformation, so that *Yahweh* is the correct word to use in speaking of the Hebrew God. All of these customs are very similar to the taboo of primitive faiths, but with the Hebrews the idea that it was a fearful thing to touch any sacred object lest the god be offended was displaced to a large extent by the thought of purity and reverence in the worship of God. That is, the idea became spiritualized and moral in tone.

[1] Ex. 22 : 18; Deut. 4 : 19; Lev. 20 : 27; Isaiah 8 : 19, 20; 57 : 3, 4; Micah 5 : 12; Zech. 10 : 2.
[2] Lev. 3 : 17.
[3] Num. 5 : 2; 19 : 18.
[4] Gen. 7 : 2, 8; Lev. 11 : 46, 47.
[5] Ex. 28 : 29, 35, 42, 43.
[6] Matt. 12 : 3, 4; I Sam. 21 : 6.
[7] I Kings 8 : 4; Ezra 8 : 28.
[8] Ex. 20 : 8–11; Neh. 10 : 31; Mark 2 : 23–27.
[9] Ex. 3 : 5.
[10] Num. 19.

**Sacrifice.** Sacrifice was developed among the Hebrews to the extent of a very elaborate ritual, all its various meanings finding expression there, the idea of a communal and festal meal, of atonement for sin, of a free-will gift in honor of the deity. There were sin-offerings ranging from a lamb to a dove or three quarts of flour, according to a man's wealth. There were thank-offerings, peace-offerings, drink-offerings, and offerings of first-fruits. We read of a scapegoat over the head of which Aaron the priest confessed all the sins of the children of Israel and which was then led out to the edge of the wilderness and sent off, bearing "all their iniquities into a solitary land." [1] In one place in the Old Testament we have a distinct reference to the sacrifice of a first-born child at the founding of a city.[2] Abraham was willing to sacrifice his first-born son at what he thought was the command of God.[3] When Achan in his greed stole some forbidden articles and hid them in his tent he was stoned to death, and thus Yahweh's wrath was appeased and continued disaster averted.[4] Sacrifices were made both for the individual and for the entire community. Especially were the sacrificial feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles of importance. Passover came at the beginning of the Hebrew year in the spring and celebrated the Exodus from Egypt. Pentecost was at the beginning of wheat harvest and Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths, after the vintage was gathered. All of these feasts probably took over certain celebrations of spring and harvest common to the people of the region. New moons were also celebrated, as was the custom among nomadic races. There were other festal gatherings as a part of their observances. At some of them there was so much hilarity that one author represents the din as comparable to the siege of a city.[5] It was very easy for the unthoughtful to identify religion with the strict observance of ritual and ceremony. Against this the prophets fought, trying to introduce more and more the idea that sacrifices were only the symbol of true reverence of heart and loyalty to God, such reverence and

[1] Lev. 16 : 20–22. [2] I Kings 16 : 34. [3] Gen. 22.
[4] Joshua 7. [5] Lam. 2 : 7.

loyalty to be expressed in just and upright conduct. We can see the people outgrowing many of these crude, primitive conceptions, as, for example, that of sacrificing the first-born child. The prophets' call to serve the commonweal rather than to be slavishly obedient to forms and ceremonies was a clarion call far outreaching any conception that sacrifice had held before.

**Gradual Repudiation of Polytheism.** Polytheism was prevalent all about the Hebrews. It would have been a miracle, indeed, if they had not felt its influence and carried over into their own higher form of religion many of the ideas and customs which were their age-long inheritance. Some of the very ancient Babylonian gods we find still preserved in the biblical records under slightly different names or characters, as, for example, Ishtar, the old goddess of fruitfulness, under the name Astarte, and Bel, or Baal, the old god of the earth, retained as the tutelary god of Babylon, whose worship was denounced by the prophets. The excavators have found in Palestine numerous clay and bronze figures of Astarte, who was the favorite goddess of the Phœnicians and the Canaanites. The name Baal is found often in compound place-names, as, for instance, Baal-Hermon, Baal-Peor. Usually at such places there was a shrine to Baal. Baal-tamar evidently meant the place where once there was thought to be a special baal inhabiting a palm-tree.[1] But this title *baal* was sometimes applied to Yahweh, since it signifies the "lord," or "ruler," and loyal Israelites would give their sons names combined with the word *baal*, as, for example, Eshbaal, Jerubbaal.[2] But finally, in order to make a clear distinction between their own God and the heathen god, the prophet Hosea suggests that they drop entirely the title *baal*, or "lord," in speaking of Yahweh and call him *ishi*, "my husband."[3] There are several Bible names compounded with the name Gad, who was the old god of Fortune. Possibly this is the origin of the name taken by the tribe of Gad.[4] The prophet upbraids those who worship the god of Fortune and the god of Destiny.[5]

[1] Judges 20 : 33. [2] I Chron. 8 : 33; Judges 6 : 32.
[3] Hosea 2 : 16, 17. [4] Joshua 11 : 17; 15 : 37. [5] Isaiah 65 : 11.

**Henotheism.** Abraham is represented as coming from a strictly polytheistic family, and it is not clear just how soon he or his descendants completely broke loose from such a philosophy of religion. It seems quite apparent that the Hebrew people were for long in the stage of henotheism when they recognized that Yahweh was the only God for them, but that other nations had other gods who were real and to be feared. A protest against this idea was very dramatically set forth by Elijah on Mount Carmel when he challenged the prophets of Baal. His delicious sarcasm comes ringing down through the ages: "Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." [1] One of the great missions of the true prophet was to prove that all other gods except Yahweh were false gods, but it was a conflict not easily to be won in the face of so much superstition and ignorance.

**Origin of Many Religious Customs.** It was also a difficult matter to wean the people from their belief that their God could be worshipped after the same manner as other gods. Aaron yielded to the cry of the people for a golden calf to represent the deity. Jeroboam I, in order to prevent the people from going back to Jerusalem to worship, thought it wise to set up such a symbol when the northern tribes seceded and formed a separate kingdom. The custom of placing the table of shewbread in the holy place of the sanctuary was but a transference of the primitive conception that a table laden with food should be placed before the god. The sacred ark which was supposed to carry with it the very presence of Yahweh was a copy of the sacred arks of Babylonia and Egypt. The custom of tithing for the support of the priesthood was the same custom prevalent all about them of taxing the people for religious purposes. The Nazarite vow of not cutting the hair for a certain period [2] was a relic of the idea that the hair was a living part of the body, to be dedicated to the god on special occasions.

**Character of Hebrew Monotheism.** But by degrees, from polytheism and polytheistic customs through henotheism there

[1] I Kings 18. [2] Num. 6 : 1–5; Judges 13 : 5.

came at last the clear light of a monotheistic faith and a monotheism, too, of such a spiritual character that God was not like the gods of the heathen, to be feared only, but to be loved because of his pure moral character of justice, truth, and mercy. To bring in this clear light of day was the work of the great prophets.

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE PROPHET'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION

**Origin of the Prophet.** The prophet has existed among all races and religions as a person professing to reveal the divine will. We have seen how primitive men believed that the spirit of their deities spoke to them in the whisperings of the leaves, the voice of the thunder, the sighing of the wind, the creaking of tree trunks, and the babbling of brooks. All the striking noises of nature were the voices of the gods. In some cases they thought the spirit of the god spoke directly with the spirit of the man, that the divine power came down upon a man and possessed him. This was usually when he was in a state of ecstasy or trance. They knew of certain plants which would induce that state, and some people would by this means throw themselves into ecstatic states, and their incoherent ravings were considered the voice of the divine spirit. Such a prophet was called a *mantis,* from the Greek word meaning to rave, and the persons who interpreted the oracles were called *prophētai,* or those who speak for another. *Seer* was another word, signifying the person who could see into the future by the use of omens and various signs. This person became an oracle to whom people went with their troubles. Saul went to Samuel, "the seer," when he wanted to find his father's lost asses, and he himself was thrown into an ecstatic state until they said: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"[1] These people who were considered to stand closer to the gods than ordinary human beings dreamed dreams and saw visions supposed to be sent from heaven. This was the superstitious basis upon which the order of the prophets rested in all countries. The remarkable thing about the Hebrew prophets is that the prophetic

[1] I Sam. 10 : 11.

gift was so clarified and ennobled among them that it came to mean not simply foretelling some occurrence about to happen or revealing a person's destiny in the lower and physical sense, but it involved a statesman's keen insight into the welfare of the nation and a clear-sighted moral vision of character and personality, so that the prophet literally "spoke for" a moral God.

**Gradual Development of Prophetic Conceptions.** It is true that in some other countries, as, for example, in Egypt, there were men who uttered stirring national messages against corruption and the overturning of the standards of good government, but they show no real sympathy for the downtrodden, the people who could not get justice done them. Their indignation was rather because the established standards were overturned and society disturbed. Indeed, the idea of justice in the modern sense, as a lawful recognition of any man's inherent rights, regardless of position and custom, seems not to have been awakened.

By degrees, however, among the Hebrews the cruder conceptions of prophecy were discarded. Samuel drops his office of a mere "seer" to become a truly prophetic statesman, the man behind the throne. Elijah ceases to expect God's revelation in the wind or the earthquake or the fire and finds it in "the still small voice."[1] Divination and sorcery were denounced as false means of approaching the deity, and those who still practised them were "false prophets." The true prophet began to appeal to man's reason: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith Yahweh."[2] He appealed to their sense of real justice. He contrasted the hollow mockery of a merely formal religion with the sincere service of a consecrated heart. He taught them that the essence of religion consists in a right relation to one's God, one's neighbor, and one's self.

But all this took a long time to develop. It took a long time for the individual prophets themselves to perceive clearly all that God was trying to reveal to them of his character. It took longer for the people to respond to the visions and mes-

[1] I Kings 19 : 11, 12. [2] Isaiah 1 : 18.

sages of the prophets, so that as a nation they stood for the highest type of religion. In early Hebrew history a neighboring prophet by the name of Balaam was once called upon to pronounce a verdict upon the Israelites. In the song he sang he characterizes the prophet as one

> Who heareth the words of God,
> Who seeth the vision of the Almighty,
> Falling down and having his eyes open.[1]

Later we are told that Yahweh "uncovered the ear of Samuel." [2] This opening of the eyes to see was a process which went on for centuries until the great prophet Isaiah had his wonderful vision, and the uncovering of the ear to hear God's messages continued until an Amos and a Hosea stood up and cried: "Hear this word of Yahweh."

**Characteristics of the Great Prophets.** But as we look at the stages through which the Hebrews passed we begin to perceive certain qualities common to all the great prophets. From the time of Moses there were at least two characteristics of the true prophetic message. First, it had to do with the practical affairs of the state, the welfare of the nation, and therefore the prophet must have at least the latent capacity for statesmanlike vision. As the people came to admire and follow them because of their superior leadership, much of the miraculous was associated with their personalities. This occurred everywhere in ancient history. Often the popular conception of a miracle-working diviner obscured the real significance of the genuine prophet. But as we look back and see these men in perspective it is their statesmanlike conceptions of the mission of the nation which is one of the constant factors to reckon with. The second characteristic that differentiated the real prophet from all others was his spirituality. It was a spiritual God in whom he believed and not one limited in his actions to the confines of the material world. Moreover, as his conception of the spiritual God became more and more refined his perception of purity of character became freed from

[1] Num. 24 : 4. [2] I Sam. 9 : 15. See margin for literal translation.

the grossness and sensuousness that accompanied early religions. Morality in the modern sense sprang into being because his God was a moral God, and since he was God's representative he himself must act morally.

**Their Fundamental Principles.** As we study the successive visions of the prophets we find that they elaborated four fundamental principles, partially at first, but more clearly as time went on. The first was that the ruling power of the universe must be one, that the continual clashing of rival deities could in reality have no place in a well-ordered creation. Probably the first prophets had not their eyes yet opened widely enough to take in the significance of one pure, moral God for the whole world, but they were letting the rays of light in when they grasped the nation-wide thought and protested against the worship of any other gods within their territory than the one spiritual Yahweh. The second principle that penetrated into their consciousness with increasing force was that God must be an ethical God demanding ethical conduct of his followers. This differentiated their religion from other religions and from baser forms of their own religion. Ceremonial could not satisfy such a God, only right relations between man and man. Therefore righteousness, or rightness, and justice in the modern sense of the terms were the thoughts they harped upon even to the disgust of their less ideally minded fellow men. Their gospel, then, was not only a spiritual but a social gospel pre-eminently. But since this principle of justness and righteousness seemed to be so fundamental that it involved every one with whom a Hebrew had to deal, their vision by and by expanded to take in the whole world; universal justice, universal righteousness, universal morality was the note they struck, and God became the only true God demanding a universal standard of conduct. And immediately following such an idea, as a corollary to it, there must necessarily come the thought that God and his principles were superior to any race or to any class within the race; that is, that the Hebrew race itself might perish without God's character being destroyed; in other words, God was employing the nation for his purposes rather than the nation wor-

shipping God to further their own. And if justice and righteousness were essential principles they must draw within their circle the poor as well as the rich, "the stranger within their gate" as well as the native-born Hebrew, the private citizen as well as the ruling classes. Therefore the prophets saw visions of class distinction done away with and of a truly democratic state of society. This was a marvellous vision for that day and generation when might was right and the common man absolutely subservient to "his betters."

It has been said that ancient history has come down to us in the form that would please the aristocracy because writers dared not displease their patrons, the ruling classes. If this is true in general there is one exception, namely, the history of the Hebrews, for their writers, the prophetic school, were men who dared say anything in behalf of the poor or to the ruling class or to the people as a whole, if they thought it was the voice of their justice-loving Yahweh. We have, then, these four modern notes clearly struck by the prophets before Old Testament history closes, one true spiritual God demanding ethical conduct of men, with a universal standard of justice, upon a democratic basis. Such visions have raised the prophets above the level of national significance to the exalted position of world-wide benefactors. We do not study Hebrew history for the sake of understanding one little race in the world's array of nations but that we may understand better the origin and significance of such modern, world-wide principles as these.

**Prophetic Attitudes of Mind.** There are two other qualities possessed by the Hebrew prophets that should be mentioned in order to gain a true estimate of what the prophets stood for. They may be termed attitudes of mind, the direction in which their faces were turned as they stood upon these fundamental principles. The first is that they were men of faith. They believed so thoroughly that this God of theirs was supreme, not only in their own affairs but in the affairs of all the world, that they endured present defeat and discouragement with a persistent hope such as the world has elsewhere never seen. This expectation that the future must ultimately

be brighter than the past, that they were working for great principles which must finally be victorious because the God of all creation was behind them, led this small nation to suffer persecution and defeat so long and continuously that it is one of the marvels of history that their messages did not die away or become lost. Such tenacious faith was due to the kind of God they had taken as their own. If God was all they believed him to be, the loss of all material blessings left them only the more sure that the spiritual kingdom would come and a Spiritual Ruler would prevail. The Great Prophet of the Exile most triumphantly voiced this strong faith in God and the future and their power to hold out until the ideal day should come.

The second attitude of mind was that they always turned their faces forward. They were always the Progressives, the men of the Forward Look. They never rested on the past, although they used the past to good advantage as illustrative material in their pictures of the future. But they never wished to restore the past and were never content with the present. They were reformers, not revolutionists but evolutionists, believing that the best was yet to be. They were prods in the sides of the conservatives, goads to wake up those at ease in Zion. Their conception of an ideal community was one of peace and prosperity, where "the other half," the lame and the afflicted, should have a chance also. It was so alluring that it called men to be up and doing to bring it about. It demanded practical measures here and now, such as right relations between landowners and tenants, the selection of judges who could not be bribed, the proper treatment of women and children. They were idealists, indeed, but such practical idealists that our own utilitarian world can find no more pertinent messages than the utterances of the great prophets of two thousand five hundred years ago. If we call the prophets dreamers, they were the kind of dreamers that help the world along. Dr. George Adam Smith, in commenting on the prophetic genius, truly says: "All work and wisdom begin in dreams." Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

It takes a soul
To move a body:
It takes a high-souled man
To move the masses even to a cleaner stye;
It takes the ideal to blow a hair's-breadth off
The dust of the actual.

But the prophetic vision was a growth. The prophet himself was the product of evolution. Upon the native Hebrew genius the influences of physical and political environment must work for centuries to produce the loftiest and purest truth, the enduring message that is our own inheritance.

All of these distinctive characteristics of the Hebrew prophetic genius are so unique and of such a high order and so much needed in our own day that it is quite worth while to ponder upon the messages of these inspired and inspiring men and realize their contribution to the world's advancement.

# *PART III*

# THE INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEBREW RACE

PHYSICAL MAP OF
PALESTINE
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40
ELEVATIONS
Above 6000 ft.
From 4000 to 6000 ft.
" 2000 to 4000 ft.
" 500 to 2000 ft.
" Sea Level to 500 ft.
Below Sea Level
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SYRIAN DESERT
Sidon
Tyre
Dan
Damascus
Kadesh-Naphtali
Sea of Galilee
Mt. Tabor
Endor
Edrei
Dothan
Samaria
Hill Country of Ephraim
Michmash
JERUSALEM (Mt. Zion)
Bethlehem
Adullam
Tekoa
Hebron
Engedi
Zoar
Mt. Pisgah
LAND OF MOAB
Gaza
Beersheba
Plain of Sharon
Plain of Philistia
Plain of Acre
Plain of Tyre
Plain of Esdraelon
Mt. Carmel
Kishon
Mount Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Mt. Hermon
Bashan
Hill of Bashan
Mountains of Gilead
R. Yarmuk
R. Jabbok
River Jordan
Jordan Hills
Judean Hills
Wilderness of Judea
SAMSON COUNTRY
EGYPT
ROAD TO PETRA
DEAD SEA
R. Arnon
LAND OF EDOM
34°30′
35°
35°30′
36°
36°30′
33°30′
33°
32°30′
32°
31°30′
Longitude East from Greenwich

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PALESTINE

**Three Factors in the Development of the Hebrews.** The little stretch of land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea called Palestine was the home of the Hebrew race. It is only about one hundred and fifty miles north and south by one hundred miles east and west in its largest extent, including in Greater Palestine the plateau east of the Jordan. In other words, it is about the size of our States of Vermont or New Jersey. To this little country Abraham came about 2000 B.C., and there the Hebrews developed their racial life and national characteristics throughout the long period which the Bible covers down to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The Bible is the record of that development, the literary deposit of those generations of struggle. These people had two great forces to struggle against, the land itself, from which they made their living, and their hostile neighbors, who were constantly tempting them to give up their own ideals and adopt foreign manners and customs. It is largely because the Hebrews had so many conditions to fight against that their racial characteristics became so strongly emphasized. There were three factors that entered into their development—the land, their outside enemies, and their own native genius. Some would add a fourth, the help of God, but God's providence manifests itself through the first three in shaping destiny. Therefore in beginning the study of Bible history in detail our first consideration must be the land, for it was its peculiar formation and climate as well as its situation and nearness to other nations which drew out the native powers of this people. Let us first study the physical characteristics and then we will discuss the effect of this physiography upon the development of the Hebrews

and their geographic position in relation to the other nations of the ancient world.

**The Rock Foundation.** All men are more or less the children of the soil upon which they live. The soil in turn is dependent upon the rock foundations underneath. Thus the age of a land can be determined by the kind of rock it rests on. Wherever granite is found it is known to be very old geologically, for granite rock was one of the first to be found when this planet of ours was getting settled into shape for plants and animals to live upon.[1] In that very early geologic age called the Archæan period all of this section of the world was probably still under water; over the bed of the ocean, however, there were vast, uneven beds of gray granite. As the waters receded the highest peaks of these beds appeared above the surface in this region in the Sinaitic peninsula. Mount Sinai is consequently one of the very oldest mountains of this part of the world, and its rock is remarkably beautiful, for up through the gray granite the volcanic action of later days forced red granite quartz and purple porphyry. The only other place in this section where gray granite now appears is in Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea, but this is enough to make us know the great age of the country about Palestine. For a long time the rest of the ocean bed of this district remained still under water, and by degrees its depressions were filled in by deposits of soft sandstone. Then over these a layer of limestone full of fossils was formed, and on top of this layer there appeared in time a layer of Nubian sandstone full of bright-colored iron and copper ore. Above these were deposited first a thick bed of grayish-white limestone with bands of flint running through it, and finally in one locality, along what is now the Mediterranean coast, a soft, porous sandstone. All these rocks are made under water only,

[1] It is by the depth of the layers of rock that geologists have been able to estimate the age of the earth, for they know how long it would take for certain rocks to form. Some rock formations extend down as far as forty thousand feet, and if these accumulations formed as slowly as they do to-day it would make the age of the earth one hundred million years. They also estimate the earth's age by the age of the fossils found, and physicists help in the matter by considering at what rate the heated interior could have cooled off. In whatever way scientists calculate they find this planet of ours to be very ancient indeed.

and when the water recedes the deposits cease. These rocks are the ones, with the addition of some chalky deposits made later, now found in Palestine.

It was during what is known geologically as the Tertiary period, which included the first part of the Cenozoic or Modern Life period, that the highest surfaces of Palestine began to show above the water and that land then began to appear generally in this region. The earth's surface was also cooling off. This process of contraction caused certain sections of the ocean bed to be raised higher than others. Palestine was one of these high portions which was pushed up above the water into the air like a bent bow. After a while the bow could stand the pressure no longer and broke, forming what is known in geology as a fracture or fault. This occasioned the most peculiar feature in the physical geography of Palestine, namely, the deep Jordan Valley, which is a rift extending far below ocean level. Of course the rain would flow down from the high land into the deepest valleys, and thus the Jordan River and the two seas which belong to this river system, the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, were formed. As soon as the crumbling of the rocks by the action of the atmosphere had begun to make soil, the rains washed it down into the valleys, and therefore the high ridges of the Judean mountain range are bare and rocky, whereas the valleys of the low hill region and the plains by the coast are rich and fertile. This fertile soil in the valleys and plains is formed mainly from the decomposition of the sandstone, limestone, and chalk of the hills. The chalky deposits, as was mentioned above, came later than the sandstone and limestone, for the whole region was flooded again after it had once appeared as land.

**The Four Longitudinal Folds.** The great folds of the earth's surface which occur in Palestine extend longitudinally from north to south. There are four of these folds, alternately high and low, and they must be kept in mind in thinking of the land of Palestine. Three of them are formed by the rift of the Jordan Valley just mentioned and the mountain range on each side of it, the one on the east being called the Eastern

Range, the one on the west the Central Range. Between the Central Range and the Mediterranean Sea is the fourth fold, the Maritime or Coast Plain. The two mountain ranges begin in the north with the Lebanon Mountains, the highest peaks of which reach nine and ten thousand feet. Mount Hermon, so celebrated in Bible history, is at the head of the Eastern Range and can be seen far and near, with its snow-clad summit looming up over nine thousand feet above sea level.

**The Jordan Valley.** The rains on these mountains and the springs underneath are the source of the Jordan River. All this water rushes into the valleys between the peaks and is soon gathered into one large stream. A little way along its course this stream widens out into a small, marshy lake called Lake Huleh, then it narrows again to a river which continues until it widens once more into a larger lake, the Sea of Galilee. After spreading out in this way for some distance the river flows out of the southern end of the lake in a narrow channel once more, but with much wider banks, until it reaches the Dead Sea. Thus the valley between the two ranges has broadened as it extends southward. This represents the present-day appearance of this valley. During the Glacial period, which came after the four original folds were made, the aspect of the valley was very different, for there were large glaciers starting in the Lebanons which affected this region especially. They flowed slowly southward, cooling off the tropical atmosphere to a temperate climate and condensing it into mist and rain. At that time rains and glaciers filled up the Jordan Valley until it was a great lake two hundred miles long. As the glaciers melted away and the rainfall decreased the borders of the lake receded, until it shrank to the three comparatively small bodies of water already mentioned, the Dead Sea, forty-seven miles long by ten miles in the widest place, the Sea of Galilee, thirteen miles long by six miles in the widest place, and the small Lake Huleh near Mount Hermon.

**The Dead Sea.** The banks of the Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea widen out for miles in some places and are rich in alluvial deposits. In the southern section, how-

ever, near the Dead Sea, the descent to the valley is steep and rugged. The river bed falls over six hundred feet below sea level just south of the Sea of Galilee, and when it reaches the Dead Sea it is over twelve hundred feet below. This makes it the most remarkable valley formation in the world. Since there is no outlet to the Dead Sea and it is exceedingly hot in this torrid valley, the water forever flowing in evaporates continually, depositing its salts in the sea. This has caused this body of water to become the saltiest in the world, so much more salt even than the ocean that nothing can live in it.

**The Mountain Ranges.** The Eastern Mountain Range, with Mount Hermon at its head, ends in broad plateaus separated only by short rivers running westward into the Jordan. The Central Range runs down from the Lebanons into the Galilean hills, where it is finally cut across by the Valley of Jezreel and the Plain of Esdraelon, through which the River Kishon flows westward to the Mediterranean Sea; then it rises again to the hills of Samaria and reaches its summit once more in the Judean Mountains near Mount Zion, the situation of the city of Jerusalem, two thousand six hundred feet above sea level. Once more it descends to the hills and vales of Bethlehem and Hebron and rolls off to the Negeb, or dry south country, which soon becomes a desert plateau. On the west of these mountains as they descend to the Maritime Plain low hills intervene. This Coast Plain, which is the fourth of the longitudinal divisions, is abruptly cut in two by one single promontory, the high ridge of Mount Carmel, eighteen hundred feet high. This spur helps to form the only semblance of a harbor the entire coast possesses, the Bay of Acre.

**Extinct Volcanoes.** Another great geologic influence which has left its mark upon the country is that of volcanic action. Extinct volcanoes are to be found east of Mount Hermon and the Sea of Galilee. Probably after the Glacial period the waters of the huge lake in the whole deep Jordan Valley penetrated so far that they came in contact with the heated gases underneath the earth's crust and occasioned great explosions and upheavals. Volcanic mountains were raised into the

air and streams of lava poured down from them and overflowed all that region. Some of these lava deposits are found even west of the Jordan. The mountain called the Horns of Hattin, the accepted site of the Sermon on the Mount, is one of these extinct volcanoes. East and south of the Dead Sea also there are signs of volcanic action which probably continued in that section to a comparatively late date. Here numerous sulphurous hot springs and bituminous deposits are to be found. The pillar of salt, mentioned in the story of Lot's wife, is generally regarded as connected with the salt cliffs still to be seen in that region. Geologists estimate that these glacial and volcanic disturbances occurred anywhere from eight to eighty thousand years ago, and that it was not a great while thereafter when the earliest inhabitants, the cavemen, appeared. The archæologist places the beginning of the Neolithic era at about 10000 B.C. and there are remains of cavemen before that.

**The Climate.** Thus we see that from the standpoint of its geologic formation, even if considered only in its preparation for human habitation, Palestine is a peculiar and interesting little strip of land. But climate also, as well as other physical characteristics, has much to do with human development. Just because of its situation between the temperate and the tropical zones, and because of its varied elevation from exceedingly high mountains to a phenomenally deep valley, Palestine possesses a most unusually varied climate. In some parts there is snow all the year around, while in others the thermometer rises at times to one hundred and eighteen degrees Fahrenheit. Between these extremes are to be found the salubrious climate of southern Europe and the temperate atmosphere of our Northern States. Owing to the variety of the climatic conditions all kinds of vegetation thrive—fruits of all sorts, grain, and flowers. Indeed, a greater variety of flora is to be found in this little country than in any other place in the world. The same is true also of the varieties of animals found here. But the climate has changed very much since Bible times. Some scholars think this is due to the cutting down of the forests. There used to be heavy timber, the great cedars of Lebanon

in the north, the oak forests south of Mount Carmel and east of the Jordan, but these have long since disappeared, having been ruthlessly cut down for their lumber. This may have affected the rainfall and has undoubtedly afforded a greater sweep to the hot desert winds and an unobstructed course to the wash of the mountain torrents after the spring rains.

**The Winds and Rains.** The situation of Palestine directly between the Arabian Desert on one side and the Mediterranean Sea on the other also affects the climate, the winds, and the rainfall. The cool, moist winds from the sea bring rain and refreshment and are welcomed with joy; the dry, hot winds from the desert parch everything they touch and are the dread of all inhabitants. Palestine is one of the countries having a rainy and a dry season. The fall and spring rains open and close the rainy season. During the summer months scarcely a drop falls. The crops are entirely dependent upon the winter and spring rains and the refreshing dews of summer-time. Owing to the uncertain conditions there are often extended periods of severe drought, such as occurred in Old Testament times, occasioning famine and great suffering. If it were not for the underground springs here and there the entire life of the country would be constantly endangered, for there are but few real rivers. The small streams of mountain brooks are called *wadies*. A *wady* almost always dries up in the summer, whereas after the spring rains it becomes a raging torrent, often in its swiftness cutting a deep gorge down the hillsides. Springs have always been much prized by the shepherds. It was over a spring that the shepherds who belonged to Abraham and Lot quarrelled so fiercely. Jacob's Well is a landmark even to this day, and in one of the Psalms the writer, in speaking of the way to meet the troubles of life, compares the wise man to one "who, passing through the valley of Baca (or drought), maketh it a well."

**Suggestions for Remembering Palestine Geography.** In trying to picture the land of Palestine to your mind's eye a few very simple but striking facts will help. First, remember that it is twice as long as it is broad at the exact centre; second, that

there are four longitudinal sections alternately high and low; third, that these parallel folds of the earth's surface are crossed once at right angles, or rather a little to the northwest by southeast, by a plain of considerable width; fourth, that at the westward extremity of this plain a high promontory runs out into the sea, Mount Carmel, the only promontory on the sea-coast; fifth, that Mount Carmel is directly west of the middle of the Sea of Galilee; sixth, that Jerusalem is only a few miles directly west of the upper end of the Dead Sea; seventh, that the highest portions of the land are in the extreme north, the Lebanons, with Mount Hermon, nearly ten thousand feet high, and the Judean Hills to the south, with Mount Zion, the site of Jerusalem, two thousand six hundred feet high.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE INFLUENCE OF PALESTINE UPON THE HEBREWS

**Different Sections Fostered Different Kinds of Life.** The four parallel sections of Palestine are separated from each other by only a few miles, yet they are very different in the life they foster. The Eastern Range, running into the high plateaus of Bashan, Gilead, and Moab east of the Jordan, became the shepherd's paradise. This high ridge, some two thousand feet above sea level, has always been sought by the Bedouin herdsman of the Arabian peninsula. Here the breezes blow, the nights are always cool, and there is moisture enough to make the grass grow. In the northern section oak forests have flourished as well as fruit orchards, and waving fields of grain meet the traveller's eye. Here the famous "bulls of Bashan" grew sleek and fat, and the "balm of Gilead" became known in all the Eastern world for its healing properties. Here the streams are more numerous than on the western side of the Jordan, with their banks so thickly covered with the pink oleander that they seem at a distance like ribbons of color. Here the views are expansive and inspiring and the whole territory is tempting. No wonder the shepherds seek this region. Even to-day the traveller is hardly ever out of sight of the numerous flocks and very seldom beyond the sound of the shepherd's pipe. One modern sheik boasted of owning thirty thousand sheep. In Old Testament times the king of Moab was obliged to pay tribute to the king of Israel in the form of one hundred thousand lambs and one hundred thousand rams. When the children of Israel came up from Egypt to the edge of their land of promise these pasture lands seemed so alluring that some begged to be allowed to remain and make their homes here. Soon it became a difficult matter to make them feel their

unity with the rest of the people, so distinct and different was their life, and so cut off from Palestine proper by the deep valley of the Jordan.

**The Eastern Plateau.** But although tempting, this part of the country has always had its disadvantages. Because of its openness to the desert the eastern plateau has always been considered a border-land of danger. Every now and then it would be infested by hordes of Arabs ready to take possession of all they could find. The volcanic formation of the rock and soil has made natural subterranean retreats in certain districts. Here the inhabitants throughout the ages have been accustomed to flee for safety from the Arab robbers that would swarm down upon them. Never were cities able to hold their own in this dangerous territory until Roman times, when the strong, efficient arm of the Roman Government made it possible for a while. But to-day the cities are all in ruins, the broken columns of houses and streets standing strange and lonely in an expanse of pasture land.

The high eastern plateau was a protection to western Palestine, against the withering desert winds and the scorching desert heat; it was also a buffer against the inroads of desert marauders. Sometimes these marauders would cross the Jordan, but more often they were satisfied with their plunder before they reached its banks or were stopped in their march on the hither side. In later Hebrew history lookouts were built to give the alarm, and many a young Hebrew won his spurs by chasing the "children of the East."

**The Sea of Galilee.** The Jordan River, issuing fresh from the cool springs of the Lebanons, is the great life-giver of the land. When it reaches the Sea of Galilee and spreads out into that beautiful blue, harp-shaped lake it seems to have arrived at the climax of what a body of water can be as a source of refreshment to all the surrounding country. The approach to the lake on either side is not attractive. On the western side are gray limestone plateaus with scarcely any trees, hot and dusty to the traveller, especially in the rainless summer months, until one comes to the drop into the valley surrounding the

lake. At some places the valley is as broad as four miles, green with grass, at others very narrow indeed, the cliffs coming close to the edge of the sea. On the eastern side, about half a mile back from the lake, the banks are steeper, breaking off abruptly from the eastern plateau, with deep gorges which the streams have cut through the ancient volcanic deposits and the limestone rock beneath. A basin of blue water surrounded by a strip of cool green slopes, sometimes wider, sometimes narrower, is the Sea of Galilee. The deep rift of the Jordan Valley would be a most exhausting place in the heat of an Eastern summer were it not for this lake. "In that torrid basin, approached through such sterile surroundings, the lake feeds every sense of the body with life. Sweet water, full of fish, a surface of sparkling blue, tempting down breezes from above, bringing forth breezes of her own, the Lake of Galilee is at once food, drink, and air, a rest to the eye, coolness in the heat, an escape from the crowd, and a facility of travel very welcome in so exhausting a climate."

**The Galilean Hills.** The region near, known in New Testament times as the Galilean Hills, was traversed by many roads and thickly populated. Here passed the great caravan route to Damascus and farther east; "Galilee is covered with roads to everywhere." Because of this a more cosmopolitan population gathered here than anywhere else in the land. These foot-hills of the Lebanons are more abundantly watered by springs and morning mists than other parts of the country. The soil also is deep and rich, and hence fertile fields, olive orchards and vineyards, and a profusion of flowers make it the garden spot of Palestine. For all the inhabitants who were gathered in the villages and were travelling hither and yon the Sea of Galilee was a breathing spot, a source of refreshment as well as a centre of industrial life with its fishing interests.

**The Jordan Valley.** As the Jordan leaves the lake and the gorge rapidly sinks below sea level the atmosphere becomes more and more torrid and unendurable. The stream itself becomes muddy and turbid and its banks a tropical jungle. Man's habitations disappear except where the valley widens

out to a plain fourteen miles wide where Jericho, "the City of Palms," rested upon the bank five miles from the stream. The fertility and resources of this plain have always been famous but the inhabitants of the city were never strong and virile. They lived in an enervating climate and Jericho was always easily taken by the enemy. "It was impossible they could be warriors or anything but irrigators, paddlers in water and soft earth." A little south of this was one of the most frequently used fords across the river, the Pilgrim ford. The current of the Jordan is very swift, descending so rapidly from the mountains, and is therefore difficult to cross, there being only three or four excellent fording-places in all its length, although there were twenty or more in all. Of course the best fords were chosen by the caravans travelling back and forth from Babylonia and Egypt, and they had much to do with determining the routes of international trade and warfare. One of these was between Lake Huleh and the Sea of Galilee, another just as the Jordan leaves the Sea of Galilee, and two others near Jericho. The soil of the valley south of Jericho to the Dead Sea is so impregnated with salt that scarcely anything will grow, and it presents a barren, uninviting aspect. The Jordan River, therefore, in its entire length, served to divide rather than to unite the two sections of the country.

**The Central Range.** The Central Range, south of the fertile Plain of Esdraelon, became the main scene of action in the life of the Hebrew people. This range has been called the backbone of Palestine, and it was the backbone also in the body politic of the inhabitants. As we have seen, the hills of the northern portion, which later were called the hills of Galilee, were fed by the rains, dews, and springs of the high, cold mountains above and became the attractive portion of the country to foreign visitors. The fishing of the Sea of Galilee grew into an important industry, and the Plain of Esdraelon was the great grain-growing region for the whole territory. Farther south the mountains appear again and rise gradually to the higher ground of Samaria.

This section in ancient times was called Mount Ephraim, and

as one views it from a distance it looks like one rounded mountain mass. But as one approaches nearer passes are soon discovered not very difficult to travel, valleys and plains spread out here and there, and its accessibility is realized. These were its chief characteristics in ancient history, that there was much good land and many a "fat valley" and that it was accessible. Because of this openness and ease of approach it was hard to defend against the encroachments of the enemy. Between the hills of Galilee and Mount Ephraim, or Samaria, stretched the attractive Plain of Esdraelon, noted especially as the great battle-field not only for the local struggles of the children of Israel but as an international battle-field of the great powers. Samaria is the geographic centre of the land. As one goes farther south along this Central Range the mountains become more rugged, the passes more difficult, and the gorges more forbidding.

In these higher hills of Judea the industries of the people change from general farming to sheep-raising and cultivating the grape and olive. Those who depended on the soil for their livelihood had a harder time than in Samaria. The Judean agriculturists always looked upon the people of Samaria as having an easy life, and the sterner necessities of their every-day experience did produce a more rugged type of character here than in the north. There was another advantage, the isolation of the Judeans. Here such people resorted as wished to preserve the distinctive life and characteristics of their race.

High up in the mountains, away from the general routes of travel, is the naturally fortified city of Jerusalem. This was the great capital and religious centre of the kingdom. A very ancient fortress it was, occupied by men ever since the days of the Stone Age, one of the best naturally protected spots of all the Eastern world. The Hebrews were keen enough to see its advantages and to covet it from the first. When David finally succeeded in getting it fully into his hands he showed his astuteness as a ruler in making it a capital indeed, a city to be admired, a shrine to which to make pilgrimages. Since religion and politics were most closely bound together in all

ancient history, a capital inevitably became the chief seat of the religious life of the people. Whatever the Northern Kingdom might do to make religion popular by having many shrines that the people might not be obliged to travel so far, by modifying the worship to please their more cosmopolitan tastes, the Southern Kingdom pursued the policy of making Jerusalem such an attractive religious centre that pilgrimages from the borders of the land and even from other countries were gladly made to see its glory and its greatness. Here the purest type of Hebrew religion and of Hebrew thought was cultivated. Here the pride of the nation was centred.

Thus the different character of the northern and southern sections of the country determined largely the different history of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom was easily open to foreign invasion; the Southern was able much longer to withstand the enemy. In New Testament times Galilee became the cosmopolitan commercial centre of the land, whereas Jerusalem remained the exclusive and aristocratic stronghold of pure Judaism.

**The Coast Plain.** But the fourth section, the Coast Plain, figured largely in history also, for it was easier of access, more fertile and attractive, than any other portion. The waving grain-fields of the Philistines were the envy of Samson and his tribe. The abundance and cheapness of the fruit has made the region about Jaffa famous to this day, and one can look down from Mount Carmel on a beautiful carpet of color when the "roses of Sharon" are in bloom. Here the people did not need to work so hard for a living as they did in Samaria nor to stand in such constant dread of drought. But material prosperity and ease of life seemed to bring with it the temptations which changed them into a pleasure-loving people. The fields and cities along the coast were among the very first to allure the early settlers, the foreigners, to the land, who introduced their heathen customs and low ideals and thus later became a constant menace to the standards of the Hebrews. It was also the most attractive portion to foreign armies bringing with them a train of evils. A degenerate life always marked

the plains, whereas the lofty aspirations of the prophets were for the most part the product of the hills.

The forbidding character of the shore-line affected also the life of the people. Because there were no natural harbors there were no outlets of commerce seaward. Again and again harbors have been artificially constructed, only in time to become wrecks before the merciless waves. This uninviting shore protected the fertile plains from invasion by enemies on the sea side but all the more threw them open to danger along the great artery of land travel, the caravan route running straight through their borders from north to south.

**The North and the South.** The northern and southern extremities of Palestine show the most marked contrast of all. In the north the high, snow-clad mountain peaks of the Lebanons form a barrier to travel so that the road to Damascus must cross the Jordan before it reaches Mount Hermon and the road to Antioch and Asia Minor must skirt the edge of the coast. This is the watershed that turns the rains and the springs of the southern slopes toward Palestine and makes its foot-hills the best-watered portion of all the country. These high, cold peaks also serve to condense the moisture as the breezes from the Mediterranean Sea pass over them, and thus the "dews of Hermon" have become famous in biblical literature. The south country, or Negeb, is the border-land of the desert, subject to its hot winds and frequent drought, subject also to invasions of nomads wandering northward for pasture. It is also the first foothold of the enemy as he travels toward Egypt. Here on the southern border-land many a fierce battle has been fought, the news of which was heard with trembling in the capital at Jerusalem, for it might mean the loss of an ally or the exchange of overlords.

With such a variety of climatic conditions and of landscapes, with a remarkable variety of plant and animal life surrounding them, with the natural Bedouin instinct for living out-of-doors born in them, the Hebrew people became great nature lovers. Their joys and their sorrows, their discouragements and their hopes found expression in out-of-doors speech. They were con-

stantly looking to the God of Nature to control their own lives. The winds, the rains, the springs, the flowers, the animals, all these figure very largely in the background of Hebrew history and literature. But, above all, the hills were of importance. Here, away from the temptations of the plains, they established themselves in their strongholds and worked out their national ideals. Thus we shall find that the physiography of the land has had a great deal to do with the development and destiny of the Hebrew people.

BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
PERSIAN EMPIRE
ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE
Scale of Miles
EUXINE SEA
CASPIAN SEA
GREAT SEA
ARABIA
PERSIAN GULF
ARABIAN SEA
THRACIA
MACEDONIA
PHRYGIA
CAPPADOCIA
ARMENIA
LYDIA
PISIDIA
CYPRUS
SYRIA
MESOPOTAMIA
MEDIA
PARTHIA
HYRCANIA
BACTRIA
SOGDIANA
ARIA
DRANGIANA
ARACHOSIA
UPPER INDIA
LOWER INDIA
GEDROSIA
CARMANIA
PERSIS
SUSIANA
BABYLONIA
EGYPT
Libya
LAKE OXIANUS

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE GEOGRAPHIC POSITION OF PALESTINE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

**The Situation of Palestine.** The geographic position of the country of Palestine in relation to the other nations of the ancient world is very important. We have seen that it was a tiny strip of land between the Arabian Desert on the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west, between the continents of Asia on the northeast and Africa on the southwest, between the two oldest civilizations of the world, Babylonia on the Euphrates River and Egypt on the Nile.

**Palestine, "The Pathway of the Nations."** Of course, human beings placed relatively so near one another as the Babylonians and the Egyptians would meet and have direct communication. Travel was slow in those days; but even to-day time is of small account in the Orient. Journeys were made back and forth on foot and with camels and donkeys. As the generations passed a system of commercial exchange was established, merchandise being sent to and fro by means of caravans. With the larger knowledge of the resources at the command of each of these nations mutual jealousies and political ambitions arose, and then war broke out and armies invaded each other's territory. All these people—traders, soldiers, embassies, and visitors of all sorts—would naturally take the best and least dangerous route between the two countries. This was without question the one passing through Palestine, for on the east Arabia offered a most precarious stretch of monotonous, waterless desert, with hot winds and sandstorms, with very few oases or habitations, and with the added danger of Arab robbers, whereas this little green strip along the coast, protected from the desert winds by the high mountain ranges, providing resting-

places and fruit and grain on the way, was most attractive to the traveller. Thus Palestine became "the pathway of the nations," and it always remained so throughout ancient history, for whenever the rising nations of Asia or Europe wished to get to Egypt the natural road was down the coast through Palestine. This was the road along which Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome each in turn marched her soldiers. Therefore, while Palestine seems an isolated bit of territory, too small to amount to much in the struggles of the great nations, it was in reality a cosmopolitan meeting-ground, a strategic point in international politics.

**The Two Calls Which Came to the Hebrews.** A direct consequence of being the meeting-ground of Europe, Asia, and Africa was the fact that the inhabitants of Palestine had an easy opportunity to hear the news of the world, to watch the movements of armies, to come in contact with foreigners and learn their customs and manners, and to catch the restless fever to do as the world was doing. On the other hand, the isolation and inaccessibility of the hill country, the fact that it was entirely away from the natural routes of travel and quite barren and unattractive in appearance, made it possible for the people to choose retreats where they could safeguard their own national independence and peculiar mode of life. Thus the Hebrews were constantly hearing two calls, the call of the world about them and the call of their own ideals. Palestine is physically a land of contrasts, of heat and cold, barrenness and fertility, beauty and ugliness. It has also been a land of contrasts in the spiritual influences which fascinated and held the people, either drawing them outward, to lose themselves in the mêlée of nations, or up to the hilltop to the prophet's watch-tower, there to see and to keep great visions. As a result the history of the Hebrew race spreads out before us as a unique panorama, a twofold series of pictures. The lower series represents the tendency to answer the call of the world. We have the picture of Solomon in the early days of the nation attempting to introduce the customs of a foreign court; then a picture of the Ten Lost Tribes absorbed into the Eastern world;

then the Jews of the Dispersion gaining a foothold in Babylonia, Egypt, and Asia Minor, and gradually for their own self-preservation developing the trader's instinct, until they become the most successful merchants of any nationality; and finally the horrible scenes depicting the rivalry and jealousy of other races venting their rage in persecutions, and as a consequence, of course, an exclusiveness, a closer clinging together on the part of the Hebrew people, but, at the same time, a scattering to the ends of the earth. Above this series of pictures is a second series representing the answer to the prophets' call, pictures of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul, who saw visions that the world did not see and who kept them clear for all posterity. All this started in the little strip of land called Palestine on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

**The Five Semitic Migrations.** But how did it start? How did Abraham ever get there and why did he choose this place in which to settle and to become the father of a race? The Hebrews, we must remember, are Semites. The original home of the Semites was somewhere in Arabia, but in course of generations of early nomadic life, so early that the exact dates are more or less guesswork, there began a movement resulting in five great migrations from the mother stock. First there was a movement westward toward Egypt. You remember that the Egyptian people were partly of Semitic blood. There were always especially dry times in the Arabian peninsula when the nomads were forced to wander far to keep their flocks alive. The Nile Valley was one of the well-watered regions sought again and again in time of drought by the Semitic tribes. Thus, doubtless, in very early days the original Hamitic stock of Egypt became mixed with the Semitic immigrants from the east. This was the first great migration. The second was northward into the upper end of the peninsula. Here what is known as the Mesopotamian branch of the Semites settled. Mesopotamia is a word which the Greeks applied to the region between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, from the Greek words *mesos*, middle, and *potamos*, river. The Semites who were pushing northward and eastward finally settled in this

basin of the Euphrates River, forming the colony known as Akkad. They mixed with an earlier people, the Sumerians, from the mountainous regions northeast of this plain, and gradually pushed south to the mouth of the river forming the Babylonian colony. They then ceased their wanderings and became agriculturists instead of nomads, and now we find them grouped together in cities. There were ten of these very old cities near the mouth of the Euphrates River. Ur was one of the oldest of them; its ruins are now about a hundred miles from the shore of the Persian Gulf, but in ancient times it was probably not more than ten miles inland. This change in the coast-line of the gulf is due to the additional land that has been made by deposits from the river during all these years. To-day seventy feet of land a year is made, or one mile in about seventy years. Farther inland was the city of Babylon, which in time became the capital of the colony. Another of these exceedingly ancient places is Nippur. We Americans have reason to note this city because our own archæologists have done a great deal to unearth its ruins. In the museum at the University of Pennsylvania there are many valuable tablets in cuneiform writing from Nippur, the translation of which has helped to reveal the history of Babylonia. This migration from Mesopotamia to Babylonia was the third great Semitic movement. These people were called Akkadians and had a well-established kingdom by 2800 B.C. About the same time another branch moved westward from Mesopotamia to the green strip of land on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The people taking part in this fourth migration settled on the narrow plain at the foot of the Lebanons, where they formed the Phœnician colony, and also in the lowlands of Palestine, where they formed the Canaanite race. We find this race well established in walled villages by 2500 B.C. Palestine was originally called Canaan, which some scholars derive from a word meaning "lowland." Therefore it may have been so named because it was in the green valleys and plains that these early Semitic colonists established themselves. They must, however, be very definitely distinguished from the Hebrews or Israelites, with whose history

we are especially concerned. The Phœnicians have been called "the Canaanites of the Coast." In course of time they became a seafaring people and great traders, but the Canaanites farther inland were agriculturists living in walled villages for protection. Both of these races gave the Hebrews a great deal of trouble when they came to the country to settle. Some years after the Phœnicians and the Canaanites had chosen the southern half of Syria for their home, Abraham and his family appeared, in the fifth or last of the early migrations of Semitic peoples. This was probably somewhere between 2200 and 1900 B.C.

**Why Palestine Was "The Promised Land."** We are now coming to more definite data. The Bible represents the city of Ur as Abraham's original home, and that he was first inspired to move northward to the city of Haran. This was in Mesopotamia, and here he stayed some time, but after his father, Terah, died the desire to seek a better country seized him once more, and this time he wandered down into Palestine, about three hundred miles southwest of Haran, where his cousins, the Canaanites, were already settled. Abraham had gone back to the original occupation of the Semites, the keeping of flocks, and he found the pasture lands of Palestine very attractive. He also found this country attractive because he was far enough away from his family traditions at Haran and Ur to worship God as he wished, unhampered by the customs of his people. Thus the story runs and can be accepted as representing the origin of the Hebrew race, whether Abraham is regarded as a real person or only as a later personification of a tribal movement. He was regarded as the founder of the Hebrew race, the father of the Israelites, the first of the patriarchs. As his descendants increased, each generation preserved Abraham's religious ideals and visions of national greatness and added to them, until finally they became a people strong enough to overshadow the Canaanites and to rank as the most important settlers in the land. During their long sojourn in Egypt they considered Palestine their native land, belonging to them by divine right because their ancestor, Abraham, had settled there,

and upon their return it was this conviction that finally made them victorious over the Canaanites.

**Various Races in Palestine.** Palestine was inhabited in prehistoric times by cavemen, or troglodytes; then later by Semitic colonists, the Canaanites; and finally, many years afterward, by the Hebrews, with Abraham as their patriarch. While the Hebrews were in Egypt the Philistines, a race foreign to Semitic life and customs, came from the island of Crete and settled in the plain south of Mount Carmel. Other Semitic tribes also wandered in from the east—the Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and other minor tribes. Still another race, the Hittites, a nation of exceptionally strong characteristics, at one time forced their way from the north down through Palestine as far as Egypt, leaving behind them remnants of their people who played some part in Hebrew history. This land of many races has been known by four names: Canaan, or the home of the Canaanites; Palestine, or the land of the Philistines; the Promised Land, or the hope of the Israelites; and the Holy Land, because of the sacred associations which have come down to us of the present day.

**Palestine Not a "Holy Land" to the Great Powers.** It was indeed a land of hope at every stage of Hebrew history, but it was not a holy land to the great powers of ancient history. When Assyria supplanted Babylonia she wanted Palestine because it was the gateway to Egypt. When Babylonia revived, Nebuchadrezzar took the Hebrews captive and dragged them away from Jerusalem because, backed by Egypt, they had opposed his suzerainty in the southland. When Persia became the supreme power and swallowed up all that had been Assyria and Babylonia, King Cyrus allowed the Hebrew captives to return to Jerusalem because he hoped they would be his allies in Palestine when he wanted to march through to Egypt. When the Persians gave way to the Greeks and Darius surrendered to Alexander the Great, Palestine was in the direct route from Alexander's new city, Alexandria, to his conquests in the East. When Alexander died and his kingdom was parted into sections among his generals, the Seleucids took

Antioch in Syria as their capital, whereas Egypt fell to the Ptolemies. Palestine was now a constant bone of contention between these two families. For a time it belonged to the Ptolemies, then the Seleucids wrenched it away. Back again it went to Egypt, given as dowry to the king's bride, who was a daughter of the Seleucid king, when her father wanted to make peace with his Egyptian rival. Yet again, however, Palestine had to pay tribute at Antioch. Thus the checkered history of the Hebrews continued until Pompey, representing the first Roman triumvirate, wanted Palestine among his possessions and took home with him the nominal Hebrew ruler to adorn his triumphal procession. Crassus, on his tour to the East, saw nothing that he regarded as sacred in Jerusalem and desecrated even the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Titus burned the Holy City and took the Golden Candlestick and holy vessels to Rome, where they are represented to-day on his triumphal arch. But when in the seventh century A.D. the Mohammedans gained possession of Jerusalem, once more it became a holy city. To-day the Moslem Mosque of Omar stands where the Jewish Temple stood.

Thus the unique geographic position of Palestine is quite apparent, open to the world and in contact with many nations, yet really hedged in and isolated, sought by the great nations of Asia, Africa, and Europe, not for its own sake but because it led somewhere, inhabited now and again by smaller tribes, because in their wanderings here they found a retreat with no single power strong enough to eject them. Like the people of our own country, practically all were immigrants, bringing with them the tendencies and traditions of other localities; yet here they found opportunity to work out their own ideas and become acquainted with their own souls. The keenest minds were always alert to know what was going on in the world, but they were also sensible of the fact that to hold their own they must cling to their own ideas and stay in their own secluded nooks and not be swept along by the mighty currents of foreign influence.

The government and politics of Palestine have always been

largely in the hands of foreigners. When this was not the case the political influence which foreign nations brought to bear upon the Hebrews was nevertheless of the greatest importance. This was the occasion for most of the messages of the prophets to their people. We should never have had the great outbursts of poetical oratory which Isaiah has given the world had it not been for the influence of Egypt and Assyria upon the counsellors of the king. We should never have had such searching exposure of the social life of the time as Amos and Micah gave us had it not been that they saw how luxurious living and careless self-indulgence break down a nation's stamina and make her too weak to stand up against the inroads of the enemy. Indeed, we cannot understand at all the great political parties which ruled the Jews in New Testament times, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, until we comprehend the influence of the foreigner in dividing the sentiment of the people, so that the Sadducees stood for the party of liberals who advocated catering to the fashions of the foreign world and the Pharisees for the party of conservatives who believed in holding strictly to their own customs and teachings.

These are some of the historical consequences of the geographic position of Palestine. The people who settled there and could maintain themselves against the encroachments of other nations must necessarily have a virility and an individuality worth watching as the panorama of history unfolds.

*PART IV*

# ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE RELATION OF ISRAEL'S POLITICAL HISTORY TO HER SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Political History Only a Framework.** Political history is by no means the whole of history nor indeed its best part; that lies within, in the inspirations and aspirations of a people, finding expression in literature and art, in institutions for social betterment and individual improvement. But political history is important as the framework for the richer material it holds together.

**An Ancestry to Hebrew Ideas.** The great outstanding ideas which the Hebrew people evolved and which are ideas to reckon with in their effect upon society were not born in a moment. There was a long period of gestation, and the especial emphasis upon certain thoughts in later times was due in some degree to the original bent given to the thinking of the race in its earliest relationships and environment. The fact that the Hebrews were Semites and inherited the Semitic way of looking at things accounts for the surety with which the later prophets pronounced their visions of God and duty. The fact that they were originally nomads with nomadic independence accounts for their attitude toward kings and kingly power. The fact that they were a much younger branch of the Semitic race than the Babylonians accounts for the inheritance of many Babylonian conceptions of the universe, customs of life, and laws for regulating conduct. This belongs to the age of myths and tradition, for history proper, authentic written history, does not begin for the Hebrews until the time of the setting up of the kingdom and the rule of David after the return from Egypt. Yet from this vague background were produced thought germs that kept on growing until concepts were reached worthy of the world's best minds.

**Hebrew Origins.** The book of Genesis has been called "the book of Hebrew Origins," and we naturally turn to it for any records or impressions or beliefs held by the earliest progenitors of the race. Here we find the stories of the patriarchs, as these forebears of the Israelites have been termed. But the stories go back far beyond these characters to the very beginning of things, even to the creation of the world, and the Bible stories are very similar to Babylonian stories. Abraham and the early Hebrews must have brought with them a background of Babylonian tradition. It would be quite impossible for us to imagine that our own early colonists coming over to America from the old and tried civilizations of Europe should not have brought with them many of the beliefs and customs and traditions of the Old World. This we know they did from the architecture of their meeting-houses to Isaac Watt's hymns and from the cups they drank from to the tea they steeped. How could it have failed to have been so with Abraham and the early Israelites? Just as in the colonial days the literature of our ancestors was English rather than American, so we find in the book of Genesis striking resemblance to the literature of the Babylonians. It seems reasonable, therefore, to think that the ancestors of the Hebrews had the Babylonian myths and traditions as their background.

Now, it has been said that "while legend is not history, it has in some respects a value greater than history. For it reveals the soul of a people, its instinctive selection of the types of character which represent its moral aspirations, its conception of its own place and mission in the world." And so we may say that these Genesis stories reveal the soul of a new people coming into the world's arena. Especially may this be seen from the way in which they differ in moral tone from the older Babylonian tales.

**Other Influences.** Again we find a period when the early Israelite tribe was gathering impressions from another race and a different environment than anything to which it had been accustomed. That Egyptian experience left an indelible stamp upon these people, the stamp of cruel oppression upon a natu-

rally very independent race. And out of this experience was produced a man of such proportions that not even a Michael Angelo in his attempt to portray him could do him justice. Moses' life and work emerge vaguely out of this half-traditional, half-historic period. But here we seem to see the Hebrew genius really at work gathering ideas and producing new thoughts to bear fruit in later days. Especially were these new-born racial thoughts becoming outlined in definite form during the years of nomadic wandering in the wilderness before their land of hope was reached. The transition period between the nomadic, tribal stage of life and the settled life in Canaan was a trying one. Political relationships then established carried with them far-reaching consequences in inner development. Moses undoubtedly received a great spiritual education during his sojourn in Midian, and very likely he gathered from his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of the Kenites, ideas which another Semitic tribe had conceived concerning true worship. Many scholars believe that as Moses led his band of Israelites across the Sinaitic peninsula through the land of the Midianites, where he had previously spent so many years getting acquainted with the tribe of Kenites, there was an amalgamation of these two tribes, perhaps of several Semitic tribes, and that when Joshua finally led the company across the Jordan, his followers were not only Israelites who escaped from Egypt at the Exodus but also kindred people from whom they had learned much religiously.

In this second great tribal move of the Hebrew branch of Semites into the little strip of coastal land we find the same two motives that governed Abraham and the patriarchs, the religious and the utilitarian motive: they wanted to serve their God, Yahweh, and they wanted a country of their own.[1] This latter they believed had been promised them by their God, and thus the conquest of the land also became a religious undertaking. Transitions are important in shaping future destiny; the

[1] While undoubtedly in Moses' mind the religious as well as the utilitarian motive was present, there is a question as to how clear a conception of Yahweh was held by the patriarchs.

transition from the unsettled tribal period to the settled agricultural period is one of these important stages.

**The "Land of Promise."** The Israelites entered Canaan with hopes of soon possessing the land. Their vague anticipations were idealized later in the following language: "Yahweh thy God is bringing thee into a good land, a land of brooks and water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper. And thou shalt eat and be full and thou shalt bless Yahweh thy God for the good land which he hath given thee." Doubtless those who remembered the slaves' quarters in Egypt expected that each family would have a home of its own. As they mingled with their nomadic brethren picked up by the way anticipations would grow that they would become owners of large flocks and herds and that there would be pasturage enough for every one.

**Relative Importance of Kings and Prophets.** But they did not count sufficiently upon the strength of their enemies, and for a long time they were struggling with destiny to see who would be the victor. During that struggle certain innate tendencies asserted themselves, certain reserve forces came to their rescue, certain ideas held in solution crystallized into definite form. There were a few great men and women who helped along this process; Deborah was one of them, Samuel was another. Out of discord and individualism began to appear unity of feeling and loyalty to the commonweal. Now we come to the truly historic epoch included in biblical records, and here Israel's political leaders are clearly in evidence. The importance of their doings seems uppermost in the minds of the Hebrew historians. But as we view their acts in perspective their great importance to the world seems to be because they created occasions for the prophetic voice to be heard. The prophets rather than the kings gave highest and most lasting expression to Hebrew genius. Elijah has been of much more

value to the world than Ahab, although Ahab and Jezebel produced the occasions for his utterances. Isaiah has been of infinitely greater intrinsic worth than Uzziah, although Uzziah brought in such a long reign of peace and prosperity as the Hebrews had not known since the days of David.

Progress in civilization anywhere is due to the answer of the people to the two interacting forces, the policy of political leaders and the voice of the prophet. Israel's record is a threefold record, first of the doings of kings, second of the messages of great teachers, and third, of the way in which the people gave response or refusal to these messages in the midst of their peculiar political and social conditions. The policy of the political leaders of both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms was on the whole little above that of the rulers of surrounding nations. Although David had glimpses of a unique kingdom, a people's kingdom, Solomon, his son, stressed the weakest spots in his policy, and affairs were brought to the breaking-point when the grandson, Rehoboam, appeared. The story of the Northern Kingdom is one continuous tale of political intrigue and the selfish greed of the dominant party. Even in the Southern Kingdom, where a halo was placed over the memory of King David and over the City of Zion, the best of rulers were so hard pressed by the immediate exigencies of national affairs and the apparent necessity of pleasing their courtiers that it was a difficult matter for them to see the sun because of the fog. It took a prophet to climb the mountain and see the sunrise above the mist and to declare from his height above the grovelling people the beautiful landscape he saw. Even the good King Hezekiah, with much ability and the best of intentions, was in constant need of Isaiah to keep him from listening to the clamor of his political advisers.

**The Part the People Played.** It is the same story the world over, all down the centuries; rulers believe that the political game must be played and he who can play it with the greatest shrewdness is the best ruler; prophets believe there is a mission for their nation and he who is truest to the ideal is serving his country best. As the politicians make their moves

on the checker-board of history the prophet watches anxiously from above and calls out his approval or his warning. And the people are swayed now by the dominant force of the political powers, now by the clear, clarion call of the prophet's voice. The interesting thing about Hebrew history is this, that because of the native independence of the race even the rulers who tried most successfully to imitate Oriental despotism could not drown the prophet's voice nor could they overrule the will of the people beyond a certain point. Even the Roman Empire that held the whole world in the iron grip of the emperor's will had to handle the Jews discreetly lest they break out in revolt. There was always a nucleus of high-minded citizens, a loyal "remnant" that believed in their national mission, that were listening for the voice of a leader, that were ready to follow a shepherd who did not "foul the waters with his feet."

Thus Israel's idealists had a chance to draw the picture of their Utopia more and more definitely and clearly, not because the politicians paid attention to it but because there was a loyal nucleus of people who responded. The picture as we look back upon it now—that picture of a Prince of Peace, of a Good Shepherd of his sheep, of a Kingdom of God—grew out of the needs of society, the crying needs of the people; but it was also due to the independence of their nature and the bold daring of a few, of an Elijah from the desert who made King Ahab fear him when he walked into his palace; of an Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, who made even the royalty take notice; of a Micah who scored the political bosses along with all the rest of the oppressors of the poor; of an Isaiah who formed a people's party when the courtiers would not listen; of a Jeremiah whose message the king cut out of the roll with his penknife and threw into the fire.

The reason why Hebrew ideals are worth considering to-day in our modern civilization is because they were wrought out in a living organism, the soul of a people in a political body.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## THE RECORD OF ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**The Literary Scholar Compared to the Archæologist.** The archæologist lays bare stratum after stratum of material as the diggers delve into an ancient mound. Where one city has been built upon the site of another centuries have elapsed between the era of the first foundations and the last. The mound of Gezer, for example, shows three city walls, the central one being the oldest and dating back to the days of the cavemen. The inner one was probably made as early as 2500 B.C. and a thousand years later the inhabitants of a new city built the last one. The literary scholar may be compared to the archæologist. His problem is much the same except that the Bible is his source book instead of a mound of earth. If he knows the signs in literature that indicate different periods of life he perhaps discovers that he has before him in one book of the Bible several different strata of material.

**Compared to the Geologist.** A more accurate comparison might be to the geologist reading the signs of different ages in a bank of earth, for the earth's layers of soil are not always level; the same layer may tip very considerably and seem to be entirely out of position because of the pressure of some geologic convulsion that turned the earth in that locality upside down. So it is with literary documents: the first to be read may be the last to have been written or between two parts of the same document another may have been inserted. The land of Palestine is a good example of the position in which a geologist may find the deposits of the various ages of the earth's surface. Limestone is the oldest rock, then sandstone, and then much later deposits of chalk and alluvial soil. But the folds of the earth's surface, made when it was cooling off and con-

tracting, have pushed the older limestone to the top in the central range. A parallel to this may be found in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. The first account of the Creation story from Gen. 1 to 2 : 3 is the later account. The version beginning with Gen. 2 : 4 scholars believe to be the earlier one because of the earmarks it bears, such as the earlier words, the more poetic style, the more naïve point of view. Another example of the way in which the strata lie is the two accounts of David meeting King Saul for the first time. It is quite evident there are two versions of this story, for one represents David as introduced to the king at his court, the other as never having seen him until he visits the camp when Goliath is striking terror into the hearts of the Israelites. Or yet again, so far as the position of the books themselves is concerned, Ruth and Chronicles belong at the end rather than in the first half of the Old Testament, for, while dealing with an early section of Israel's history, they were written from a late point of view.

**Evidences of Different Strata.** The evidences used in marking off different strata of literary material come to be quite familiar to the scholar. They are the historical allusions, the literary style, the particular words used, the general point of view. For example, in the last half of our book of Isaiah the historical allusions are to an entirely different period from the first half, the setting is the setting of the Exile, whereas in the first half Jerusalem has not yet fallen and the people are still living at home in their own city. Moreover, the literary style and the point of view are quite different. Therefore it is supposed that another prophet, the Great Prophet of the Exile, as he is called, wrote this last part and not the Isaiah of the first part. The book of Daniel is an excellent example of the way particular words reveal the different strands of material sometimes entering into the make-up of a single book. Here we find classic Hebrew such as was used before the Exile, Aramaic, which was the dialect spoken after the return, Persian words and Greek words showing the advent of those powers before the book was finished. Where earlier and later stories

were pieced together to make one narration the editor often thought it necessary to insert explanatory remarks here and there, and it must be noted that a story of an early time retold in a later age possessing different ethical ideals will often reflect the later conceptions.

**The Problem of the Literary and Historical Student.** What, then, is the problem of the literary student of the Bible? It is to read these signs of the times so accurately that the different layers of material may be distinguished and those parts which belong to the same period may be gathered together as revealing the life and thought of that particular age. And what is the task of the biblical historian? It is to take the documents that fall in one period and from them to reconstruct the background for the life and thought of the people at that particular time. This is a great study, for the life of a people at any particular moment involves their economic and industrial life, their social life, all the ideals they have at that especial stage in their development, and also the question whether or not they are living up to their ideals. It involves their ethical and spiritual conceptions, their standards of conduct, both individual and social. Many scholars have been at work for years upon these fascinating problems and the results of their labors are becoming more and more clear. If the historian can reconstruct the background of any age he makes that age live again. If he succeeds in doing it for each successive period he makes the panorama of national history a vivid drama before our eyes.

For example, in the book of Amos society is represented as in a most self-complacent mood, the rich people luxurious, self-indulgent, indifferent to the needs of the poor or the welfare of the nation, vainly imagining that prosperity will always continue because it is theirs for the moment. The book of Zephaniah depicts a different background. Social self-complacency has been violently disturbed, the warnings of the prophets have come true, and there is a more complete fulfilment yet to expect. Society is in the shaking-up process. In the book of the Great Prophet of the Exile we find the crash has come, punishment has been meted out to the very limit. Discouragement will

set in to the utter undoing of all national hopes unless some encouraging voice is raised to sing: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Yahweh's hand double for all her sins." It is quite evident that with such changes of social background there are also advances in ethical teaching and spiritual insight. Such a series of pictures of the times reconstructs biblical material into a life drama of the race. At no point is there a static condition of society, at every point the social forces are dynamic, and therefore the ethical and spiritual truths revealed are progressive. It is life that is being depicted, natural, human life, far from ideal, seething in passionate struggle for expression of its real self.

**Progressive Teachings.** Out of that continuous struggle come certain teachings, never divine fiats uttered from a heavenly throne set apart from this human world, but words throbbing with human sympathy because words spoken from hearts beating under human emotion, teachings made vital because they have been wrought out of life itself. Such a progressive reconstruction of biblical material, such a serial story of the social history of the Hebrew race, clarifies our ideas of biblical teaching. Such a study of the Bible causes us to read the book of Samuel with a different expectation from that with which we read Jeremiah. How could Jeremiah be a prophet of the period immediately preceding the captivity and not give for his own day and consequently for our day a different warning, a more fundamental hope than even the brilliant King David perceived at the very beginning of national life? How could the writer of the Gospel of John give us the same interpretation of the meaning of the mission of Jesus as the earlier authors of Mark or Matthew or Luke? For life and the gospel of life is never static but always dynamic.

**Stages of Social Progress.** This is evidently the way in which the Hebrew contribution to the ideals of civilization was revealed and worked out, through stages of social progress, through the minds of men who had the power to see beyond

the outward appearances of society to the essential meaning involved in any particular stage. Those divinely illumined minds spoke messages for their own day to meet the difficulties of their own social conditions, but they are messages for our day because life keeps repeating itself in the needs of groups of men as well as in the needs of the individual. The literature of a race is but the outward and material encasement of an inner writing made continuously upon the hearts of the people through their economic and social developments. This inner writing consists of the ethical and spiritual lessons learned. With the Hebrews it resulted in striking religious messages. The helpfulness of the messages to us lies in the fact that they were the product of those universal stages of development through which all races seem to pass.

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE NOMADIC STAGE

**The Evolution of Israel's National Life.** While the life of the Israelite nation was pressed and moulded from without by the impact of foreign powers, it was forced into certain channels from within because of the natural evolution of a primitive people through various steps of internal development. These steps represent certain stages of civilization and culture, more or less common to all races, provided they remain long enough in one spot and provided also the physical conditions are such as to encourage change and progress.

**The Nomadic Stage.** There are three great stages of civilization through which peoples pass—the nomadic, the agricultural, and the city-life periods. A settled home, with family possessions gathered about and rights of tenure fixed by law, is a comparatively late social development. In primitive conditions the necessity of hunting for food develops the wandering or nomadic instinct. Each man must find his own subsistence, and there are as yet no elaborate systems of exchange. The land itself has not been brought under cultivation, so that great areas are needed to support flocks or herds or the wild animals used for food and clothing. Some countries seem adapted only to this kind of life. The Arabian peninsula is one of these. Because of its desert character it has never been possible to make it over into a land of fields and gardens. But the land is principally good for grazing and the pastures must extend over large territories because of the seasons of drought. This necessitates a wandering tent life such as we find among the Arabian Bedouins to-day. They are living practically the same kind of life that the patriarchs of Old Testament history lived simply because the land itself does not respond to cultivation. But even in a country like North America, where there are rivers

and lakes and a sufficient rainfall and consequent fertility of soil and an abundance of vegetation, we find that in the earliest days primitive men wandered over large sections in their hunting and fishing expeditions. The North American Indians clung together in tribes and each tribe assumed possession of a certain large territory sufficient for its purposes. If another tribe tried to cross their land there was war, but within their recognized bounds they were free wanderers with definite trails back and forth to the good fishing and hunting grounds. Tents are the most easily portable habitations, and therefore an Indian and his teepee are always associated.

These two examples of the primitive state of society, taken from the East and the West, serve to illustrate the fact that however we may find society to-day, if we trace back the history of a race far enough we come to the primitive nomadic stage. Some nations like the United States have begun with the agricultural stage, but only because they have built upon the civilization of their ancestors and brought it to the new country, for the ancestors of the Teutonic races were once nomadic hordes.

**Abraham's Wanderings.** In the history of the Hebrew race there were several hundred years of nomadic wanderings which preceded any settled state of society. The first Hebrew family, we are told, came from the cities of Haran, in Mesopotamia, and Ur, in Babylonia, in the centre of an agricultural district, but had wandered away from their original home. Perhaps they did not enjoy the artificialities of city life, or perhaps they never lived in the city itself, only its region, and sought a larger opportunity in a less thickly settled district. At any rate, they went back to the original occupation of the Semites, that of the shepherd. Shepherds in those days were obliged to live a nomadic life in order to find enough pasturage for their flocks. The story tells us that Abraham found the land along the coast south of the Lebanons adapted to his purposes. The high ranges of mountains just west of the Jordan River and the plateaus just east kept back the hot, destructive desert winds, and the sea so near at hand brought moisture and relief when

the grass would be all dried up farther inland. Several spots in Palestine are especially associated with Abraham. Shechem in the centre and Hebron in the south are the most prominent, but doubtless Abraham wandered about freely in different seasons, wherever he could find the best grass for his sheep and cattle. But Hebron seemed to be his headquarters and the Plain of Mamre, in which it is situated, his favorite pasture-land. After his death his son Isaac seemed to like this southern part of the country best. The stories of his life are confined to the region southwest of Hebron, extending from Gerar, near the coast, to Beersheba, twenty-five miles farther inland. These stories centre about the wells of water which either Abraham or Isaac himself had dug for their flocks. Wells and springs in Palestine have always been a most precious possession, since the climate is so very dry and there are so few perennial rivers. The name Beersheba means either the Seven Wells or the Well of the Oath. Here, after digging some time, Isaac's servants brought him word: "We have found water."[1]

These wells soon came to be landmarks sought for in their wanderings as the sons and grandsons of the patriarchs became more numerous and were forced to go farther afield to satisfy their needs. One of these old wells was in the Plain of Dothan. To this place the sons of Jacob had wandered one season from the region of Hebron when the pasturage had grown dry down there. The seventeen-year-old lad Joseph had been kept at home and his father, Jacob, sent him on an errand to his brothers. He thought he would find them at Shechem, the first stopping-place of his grandfather, Abraham. But they had wandered on farther and he was told he would find them in the Plain of Dothan. It was into an old well at Dothan that the brothers put Joseph to get rid of his troublesome boasting, and there he met his fate as the Ishmaelite caravan picked him up and carried him off to Egypt. This all plainly shows the nomadic character of Hebrew life down to the time when, because of the lack of pasturage and threatened famine, the brothers were forced to go to Egypt themselves for relief.

[1] Gen. 26 : 32.

**Industry in Egypt.** In Egypt for many generations, possibly four hundred years, the Hebrew tribe lived much the same kind of a shepherd life as they had lived in Palestine but were at last drawn into the industry of brick-making as slaves. Such an industry belongs essentially to the city-life stage of society, and the Israelites saw the hard side of it, the industrial side. But when they finally made their escape they once more became nomads for two reasons, first because of the old inherited instinct of their shepherd ancestors which the artificial Egyptian life had not eradicated, and, second, because of the character of the land through which they must travel. The Sinaitic peninsula, like the Arabian peninsula, is a land of Bedouins. Here they wandered for forty years, most of the time near the oasis of Kadesh, probably joining the tribes already there. Thus they again became accustomed to nomadic ways. The new generation grew up as nomads, and the laws that Moses enacted at this time were adapted to that kind of life.[1] Even their house of worship was a tent or tabernacle that could be picked up and carried with them when they broke camp.

**The Training of the Wilderness.** During these years Moses had an opportunity to weld the people together so that they acquired some feeling of tribal unity. They were not yet a nation. They had not yet arrived at national consciousness. They needed much training to free them from the subservient habits of a slave people and to develop that independence and ability to meet hardships and conquer them which are characteristics of life in the open, for there is no other life that develops such hardihood and bravery. The daily life of a nomad horde is splendid training also in organization. Strict system must be observed in herding the flocks, and when camp is broken and a new march begins it is a difficult art to keep the line well ordered and unbroken. It is the march of a peaceful army until attacked, and then good discipline at once asserts itself in defense. Moses was a wise leader to keep his clans in

[1] Modern scholarship finds a nucleus of Mosaic thought in the later redaction of the so-called "Mosaic legislation."

"the wilderness" until he should have them sufficiently trained and sufficiently loyal to their own ideals to cling together and to make some impression upon hostile tribes. He was sagacious enough to accept his Midianite father-in-law's suggestion of dividing the camp into companies of tens, hundreds, and thousands under judges who were also captains in time of attack. And so the incipient nation became a disciplined army. When at last they crossed the Jordan and reached "The Promised Land" it was only their nomadic courage and prowess and the degree of organization fostered in the desert that gained them the victory over their enemies and insured them a permanent settlement.

**A Transition Period.** Another century must pass before they really attain to any degree of national solidarity, for there had to be a decided readjustment economically and politically when they ceased to be wanderers over the face of the earth and became householders and owners of land. This is the transition period from the nomadic to the agricultural stage of society, from the tribal to the national. "The nomad is economically a herdsman, politically a conqueror, and chronically a fighter." Now he must learn the arts of peace and the more varied occupations of an agriculturist. But for many generations nomadic life and traditions made their impress upon Hebrew character and customs. One of the chief characteristics of this kind of life is independence and individualism. The tribe is the unit. It obeys its sheik, and the sheiks even down to the present day are chosen by common vote. This independence and tribal individualism we find stamped upon the history of the early Israelites. In fact, they were so individualistic that after they began to settle down in stationary homes and call a portion of the land their own, it was a very difficult matter for their leaders to arouse in these separate tribes enough loyalty to their interests as a whole to preserve them from the inroads of the enemy.

**Enemies.** When the Israelites arrived in Canaan there were three groups of people already on the spot, people who had been there for generations, some of them long before the

father of the Hebrews ever conceived the idea of migrating thither to become the sheik of a new tribe. They had no notion of allowing a few wandering tribes to walk in and take their homes away from them. One of these three groups lived on the eastern side of the Jordan River. They were rather closely related to the Hebrews, one branch, traditionally, being descendants of Esau. These were the Edomites, who had an old-time grudge against the Israelites—the same grudge that started in the rivalry of their ancestors, Jacob and Esau. There were also Moabites and Ammonites even closer to their coveted goal, supposed to be descendants of Lot and possessing the same low ideals and selfish interests as their ancestor. There were also "the Midianites and Amalekites and children of the East." These were all like our North American Indians in the early history of America in that they were bitterly opposed to having another tribe march through their territory. They made it as hard as possible for the Israelites to get up to the Jordan River, from whence to cross over into Canaan, and they kept up their hostilities afterward, embracing every opportunity for plunder, so that the tribes that settled upon the land bordering these enemies had to be constantly on the alert to defend themselves from their raids.

After the Israelites had actually crossed the Jordan they found that the second hostile group, the Canaanites already settled there, were not to be ousted from their walled villages without hard fighting. The Israelites attacked them vigorously at first, under the lead of the valiant Joshua, but they soon tired of the undertaking; the separate tribes were too eager to get possession of their portions of land to keep up the warfare until the Canaanites should be entirely driven out. Therefore a compromise was made; each tribe settled in its own section, with the understanding that it was to continue the fight for all while their homes were being started. But this they did not do. The Canaanites still remained in the land; the Israelites got footholds where they could, but the Canaanites were a constant menace to their welfare, because, even where they were not openly hostile, they contaminated the Israelites with their

lower ideals of morality. However, the Israelites learned from them much that was useful in the art of agriculture and also the best means of protecting themselves in villages in contrast to their recent Bedouin tent life of the wilderness.

The third enemy, upon whom the Israelites found it most difficult of all to make any impression, was the Philistine people, those non-Semitic foreigners from the island of Crete, who had settled on the fertile strip of coast land in the west. They were of a fighting stock. They had fortified towns that were not easy even for experienced armies to approach, as was proved when much later the Assyrian generals and Alexander the Great tried to get possession of them. They had no intention of giving up the fine, fertile grain-fields, which they had gained for themselves, to a tribe of nomads who had no more right to them than they, nor so much, if the right of first settlers had any force. These Philistines instilled wholesome fear into the minds of the Hebrews and remained a formidable foe even after the kingdom was started under Saul and David.

**Loss of Aggressive Spirit.** Thus the Israelites were beset by enemies and found their new home anything but one of peace and security. Moreover, when the first spirit of enthusiasm over the conquest of the territory had died down and the inspiration of their courageous captain, Joshua, had passed away, they fell back into a non-aggressive mood, content with holding their own, if they could, in the various spots where they had chosen to settle. We read that at first they were very barbaric, catching a king and cutting off his thumbs and great toes. Even after they had decided not to go on aggressively driving out the settlers already there, we find that the Israelites had instilled enough fear into their opponents so that they could engage them in "task-work," much as they themselves had been enslaved by the Egyptians.

**Barbaric Times.** But soon the tables were turned. As the Israelites began living more intimately with their hostile neighbors some of them intermarried and even adopted the heathen worship. Their enemies discovered that the Israelites were not so formidable as they had supposed and that they could easily get the advantage over them if they tried. Therefore they

"despoiled" them whenever they could. Here and there a strong Israelite leader would appear to deliver his people for the time being, but for eight years they were obliged to serve the king of Aram-Naharaim, and at one time to pay tribute to the king of Moab. The leaders who still had some of Joshua's spirit left in them were called "judges," but they were not judges in our sense of the word. They were more like highland chieftains of Scottish history who rallied the members of their clans about them in time of danger. One of these judges was the left-handed Ehud, who, because he kept his two-edged sword on his right instead of his left thigh, was able to deceive the king of Moab and thrust him through in the privacy of his own chamber. The book of Judges is full of such barbaric incidents depicting the age in which the Israelites lived. All the nations of that time thought anything was fair in war, but because of the untrained and disorganized state of society through which the Israelites were now passing they seem to us half-civilized in their domestic as well as foreign relations. It was a rough time and life became more and more disorganized. It was worse for some tribes than for others, because some were nearer the headquarters of their enemies and were therefore more subject to their raids and robberies.

Deborah's Song is representative of this transition period, showing how difficult it was to arouse the people to concerted action. In that stirring battle ode she commends with heartfelt gratitude the tribes that rallied around the common cause, but she is full of contempt and bitterness for those who sat still by their sheepfolds to hear the pipings of their flocks, attending only to their own selfish interests. This was the clannish or tribal period of Israel's development. The people had not yet begun to realize that they must all act together for common interests in order even to preserve the slight foothold they had gained in Palestine. They must slowly learn the lesson of community good, that for the welfare of each tribe they must all unite and fight for a common cause.

**The Accounts of This Period.** While the book of Genesis tells the story of the patriarchal or typically nomadic life, throughout the Pentateuch there are traces of it in the laws

scattered here and there. These can often be recognized by the fact of their adaptation to that style of living, such as "An altar of earth thou shalt make to me, and shalt sacrifice on it thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen; in every place where I record my name I will come to thee and will bless thee." This injunction evidently presupposes a wandering pastoral life. "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" is another echo of pastoral days reflecting a shepherd's sentiment. "Thou shalt worship no other god, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" and "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods" recall the incident of the golden calf and Moses' indignation. "Thou shalt not wrong nor oppress a resident alien; for ye were resident aliens in the land of Egypt," [1] was evidently formulated before the Israelites had had time to forget their Egyptian bondage. The laws of these primitive codes are remarkably ethical for that day. For example: "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep and kill or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox and four sheep for one sheep." The fourth commandment was largely due to consideration for the beasts: "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest, that thine ox and thine ass may have rest." [2] The early Mosaic legislation was doubtless based upon the necessities of the people as Moses led them up to the very gate of the "Land of Promise." From these laws and the pictures of life in the book of Judges the social background of this period of their development can be reconstructed.

[1] Kent's translation.

[2] Ex. 22 : 1; 23 : 12.

# CHAPTER XX

## INFLUENCE OF THE NOMADIC LIFE ON HEBREW LIFE

**Economic and Social Conditions of the Nomadic Period.** The economic and social conditions of the nomadic period left a decided stamp upon the future of the Israelites. One marked characteristic of early Hebrew history is its democratic trend, and this was doubtless brought over from the life in the desert. For in the first place nomads are free, not tied down to the accumulations of houses and lands and the burden of much baggage; a tent, a few kettles, and bottles made of skin are the household furniture, and a man's girdle contains the most of his personal effects. Since the accumulation of property is one great factor in social distinctions, where all possessions are more or less equal the people themselves stay upon a level. Moreover, the necessary frugality and simplicity of their existence tended toward equality. A whole tribe would often be brought down to the barest provisions for life, and wherever such conditions exist they draw people together in the common battle with nature for mere subsistence. Slavery on any large scale is then an impossibility, for it is too expensive to feed slaves when food is at a premium. The women of Semitic tribes have held a more or less independent place. The restraints of civilization were not imposed upon them. They performed much of the drudgery of camp life, but mingled also in the counsels of the men. They have often been found in Arabian history in the position of judge or queen. As the mother of the family woman was much honored, although a man might have more than one wife, and the marriage bond was not very secure.

**Family and Tribal Loyalty.** Family and tribal loyalty is very strong among nomadic peoples. The blood-tie is recognized as stronger than any other, and these men will fight for

their kin as they will fight for nothing else. The mixture of the blood of entirely different races is even to-day considered a disgrace among the Bedouins. Tribesmen to-day take great pride in their family genealogies, reciting lists of ancestors for many generations. But the clan group is comparatively limited, and if other tribes cross their path toward the supplies of water and pasture, feuds are very easily started. Moreover, since the welfare of one tribe consists in outwitting a neighboring tribe by getting to the well or the oasis first, a craftiness of spirit is developed which is seen even to-day among the Bedouins. Their free life makes them very self-sufficient. It takes great crises to weld them together in common action. The biblical term "a stiff-necked generation" refers to this pride of self-sufficiency.

**Kind of Industry.** Thrift, however, is not cultivated, for a roaming life affords little opportunity to lay up store for a cold winter or a season of drought. Nomadic life is more or less of a hand-to-mouth existence and brings with it an easy-going attitude toward the future. Industry for them consists in watching their flocks and herds and working up the raw materials which they produce, cloth for their tents, skins for their utensils, horns for trumpets. It is said that we owe the Oriental rug to the tent-dwellers of the world. But with this leisurely life there is a mental training in the desert which makes a person acute of eye and ear, swift in decision, and ready for difficult situations. It stimulates the imagination also. And such intimate first-hand associations with nature call forth certain elemental enthusiasms: loyalty to the spirit of the Creator who broods over life, resulting in religious fervor; an understanding of animal life which results in close friendships with sheep and cattle and an enthusiastic attachment to one's occupation as a part of his very life. To be a shepherd meant so much more than merely to own sheep that one of the early Hebrews thought of God as his Shepherd.

**Religious Fervor.** Their struggles with nature and frequent physical sufferings are perhaps responsible for much of the intensity of the temperament of nomadic Semites. Their mo-

notonous surroundings coupled with some of the most marvellous effects of sky and landscape due to the dryness of the atmosphere accounts undoubtedly for much of their religious fervor, at the same time narrowing them down to a few great ideas. Intense desires have in them been united with intense faith. There is also time for contemplation, and everything partakes of a religious hue. Men born in the desert seem to have a genius for religion. They hunger and thirst after God as the hart that has wandered off on the dry steppes pants after the water brooks. It is notable that the three great monotheistic religions of the world—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism—took their origin from the desert. But the faith of the desert is not only intense, it is simple and often austere. Desert ideals are revealed in the account in the book of Jeremiah of the endeavor to cause the Rechabites to break their vows and indulge in the luxuries of civilization. "But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab, the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, forever; neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents that ye may live many days in the land where ye sojourn." [1] This austerity, loyalty to the family ideals of the past, and narrow range of interests of course produced a people conservative, unprogressive, more or less stationary so far as worldly ambitions were concerned, until those ambitions were inoculated with a foreign virus.

**Extremes.** When once that occurred many of them went to the opposite extreme of worldly gain, and the shrewdness developed in the desert became an absorbing passion to get the best the world affords in riches and luxury. The town-bred Arab of to-day reflects such a reaction in his wish for "a palace built of gold and silver bricks, with a delicious soft divan on which he would lie at his ease and do nothing all day but smoke a water-pipe."

**Land Rights.** Each one of these nomadic characteristics is very obviously revealed in the early history of the Israel-

[1] Jer. 35.

ites, helping to shape their economic and social life as they settled down in the "Promised Land." In the first place, the whole social structure was that of the family or clan, and family loyalty was foremost in every move they made. The land itself was apportioned by clans and then to families within the clan. The property of the community and the title to it could not be sold; neither could the land rights be rented. There were laws to prevent the land from passing out of the family. Every fifty years there was a shake-up, and all the land that had strayed away from the proper descendants in the family line reverted to them. The very name by which this incipient nation was called, "the children of Israel," denotes the family idea. All the land belonged to Yahweh as the head of this great family. Crimes were punished as family affairs. The law of blood-revenge held tenaciously, and cities of refuge were necessary for men who had killed others by accident, so fierce and speedy was the penalty meted out by the clan. Whole families were sometimes ordered to be wiped out because of the deeds of one member.

**Democracy.** Social distinctions were not emphasized. There were prosperous heads of families, and sometimes they had slaves, but every one worked side by side in the fields or on the range. Elisha was found ploughing with his men. The Shunammite woman's prosperous husband was in the field with the reapers when their little boy was taken ill. Gideon threshed out his own wheat. The well-to-do and the poor, the proprietor and the servant lived and labored side by side without apparent embarrassment. This was due to their simplicity of life and also to their marked feeling for the independence and rights of every man.

**Slavery.** Of course slavery was taken for granted at this period in all Oriental countries, but it is quite significant that Israel's attitude toward the slave was entirely different from that of any people in ancient history. If the slave were a Hebrew he must not be treated harshly and had the right to be set free in six years; he could be redeemed by his relatives; he had even the right to lay by property for himself with which

he could buy his own freedom if he wished. But very often he did not wish even though he had the opportunity. This may have been due to either of two reasons: his position may have been much more comfortable within the family group than out in the world as his own master, or if he had married a foreign wife, as slaves were allowed to do, he would be obliged to leave her and the children behind, for foreign slaves had not the Hebrew rights of freedom. A trusted servant like Abraham's spent his life most willingly for his master, performing important commissions and receiving great confidence. The drudgery of the female slave makes her lot look unenviable to modern eyes: the carrying of water and grinding of corn; but this was customary everywhere; all women did these things in nomadic days, and Professor Bennett aptly remarks that "the life even of less fortunate women-slaves must have been a heaven of light and comfort and liberty compared to that of thousands of workwomen in London." The right of the master to take the female slave as his concubine complicated matters very seriously. But it seems quite true in general that "while the codes of American slave States aimed at protecting the masters and keeping down the slaves, the Hebrew law sought to provide for their emancipation and protection from ill treatment." When we give a glance at the conditions of slavery in ancient Athens and Rome we find a marked difference in the fundamental principle upon which slavery rested. Even in the best days of these republics the slave had no rights. In Athens if the owner did not appear as his patron at court there was no law to protect him against abuse. Aristotle taught that "there is no justice toward slaves any more than toward an ass or a horse." In Rome the law regarded a slave as a *res*, a mere thing, not a *persona*, a human being; that is, he was nothing but a piece of property like a horse or dog. Professor Bennett holds that "the true history of the people for many centuries would be the history of slavery" and the great histories of Greece and Rome "the histories of ruling minorities." This seems a true statement when we realize that in Rome alone in her palmy days there were at least two hundred thousand slaves.

But it could not be said of the Israelites as long as they were a people free from the dominance of other races. Their history started as the attempt to work out the divine rights of every man of Hebrew blood, high or low. It is the history of the liberty-loving freeman endeavoring to find expression amidst the undemocratic standards of neighboring nations. The first great prophets, Elijah and Amos, were closely akin to their independent nomadic ancestors, standing up for the rights of the people against the class distinctions of the foreigners. Even down to New Testament times the prophet was the champion of the people's rights. Jesus himself was the spokesman of the laboring class, and the last words of his gospel as represented in the last chapter of the last book of the New Testament is the clarion call to "whosoever will." It took a long time to travel all the way from the idea of the freedom and inherent rights of each member of a nomadic clan to the thought of universal freedom and brotherly consideration for men of all races. But the mind of the Hebrew was elastic enough to accomplish it. It took very serious discipline to wrench him loose from his narrow, intense kinship loyalty and make him see that his God was the Father of a universal family. But the history of the Hebrews is the unfolding, step by step, of that story as no other race has revealed it. It does credit to their intellectual as well as moral strength.

In later Roman days the majority of the slaves were foreign captives. The early Israelites also made a decided distinction between men of their own race and of foreign blood. The law distinctly stated that a Hebrew must not be treated with rigor. Bodily injuries such as were taken for granted in other countries were reason enough for giving him his freedom. To be sure, the more primitive custom noted in Ex. 21 : 20 reveals great cruelty even to Hebrew slaves, showing that a master could beat his slave almost to death and not be punished for it because the slave was only property. But the later law expressly stated "thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates," thus protecting the

foreigner from abuse as well as the native Hebrew. It is true that brotherly ideas were confined in the early days within the clan groups and to Hebrew kin. Like all nations around them, the Israelites thought it right to plunder foreigners. One law states that while a Hebrew "may not eat of anything that dieth of itself," yet "thou mayest give it unto the stranger within thy gates, that he may eat it, or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner." And yet the laws we find concerning "the stranger within the gate" are remarkably considerate. A free foreigner could be adopted into a family and treated as a blood relation. An outcast from another tribe could also be adopted and given protection. In the early history of the Israelites we find the same loyalty to kin, the same status of women, the same independence of character, and much the same simplicity of life that is found in the desert. Class distinctions to some extent necessarily arose, but these distinctions were few and simple. At the top was the head of the family, the family manager, and below were the two classes, the bond-servant and the hired servant. The status of the hired servant was scarcely as good as that of the bond-servant, as is true wherever slavery exists, for the wage given is barely a living wage, and the "hired man" is only a transient where proprietors of labor depend for the most part upon the servants they own.

**Status of Women.** Personal valor was the ground of promotion to positions of honor, and men could rise from the humblest conditions to places of respect. Gideon declared that his family was the poorest in Manasseh; Jephthah was the son of an outcast; David was a shepherd lad and the youngest of his family. Women, too, were recognized for their ability and personal character, taking the lead whenever there was need. Abigail and the Shunammite woman both seem far superior to their husbands and in large measure controlled their household affairs. Deborah's wisdom and leadership were given opportunity for expression at a great crisis in Hebrew tribal history. The picture in the book of Proverbs of the model wife reflects admiration for the kind of woman who was capable in affairs, who could not only spin and weave and clothe her family, but

could also buy a field and evidently considered the matter beforehand with discriminating judgment. This was the type held up for admiration in the latter days of Hebrew history, a type drawn from the early ideals of the people. However, we often read of very unchivalrous treatment. Although in the best homes woman held a high place in the family, the father was considered the head and was responsible for the training of the children. His wife and children were his property and he could do with them as he pleased. Divorce was exceedingly easy on the man's side, but the woman had very few rights before the law, much fewer than Babylonian women in the days of Hammurabi. The betrothal of a wife consisted in the payment of a purchase price; the regular price of a wife was about thirty-two dollars of our money, somewhat more than that of a slave. But the girl evidently had the power of consent reserved to her. Her own family, her father, uncles, and brothers, were her only protection after marriage against a husband's abuse. Moreover, a father could sell his children into slavery if he saw fit.

The property of a family descended through the male line, and it was considered the greatest of misfortunes if there was no male heir. Sometimes a male slave was adopted into the family to save it from extinction. The frequent injunction to benevolence toward widows and children is due largely to the fact that the woman had no share in her husband's property at his death. Not until a late day did the rabbis make any provision for her. There was a late law that if a man died without a son his inheritance might pass to his daughter, but an injunction was added that she should marry within her own tribe, so that the inheritance might not pass out of the family.

Their homes when seen at their best were noted for affection and comparative freedom for the women and careful oversight of the children. Parents, though sometimes austere, were often very indulgent. Yet at the worst woman found her lot but little better than that of a slave. Moreover, bigamy and polygamy were taken for granted. Monogamy was not fully accepted by the Jews until the ninth century A.D. This was far

below the ideals of the Babylonians. There was a double standard of morality, one for men, another for women.

**Priestly and Military Classes Later.** In this early period there were no priestly and military class distinctions. Modern scholarship has clearly shown that the elaborate system of the priesthood was not devised until much later and the fighting was done by volunteers until the time of the kingdom.

**Desert Vices and Virtues.** We find the desert vices as well as desert virtues among the Hebrews. Jacob was noted for his craftiness. Moses allowed the people to borrow jewels from the Egyptians with the evident design of never returning them. Jeremiah pessimistically declares that "every brother will play Jacob's tricks." [1] But their rich fancy is again and again demonstrated in their poetry and the intensity of their faith is the great contribution this race has made to the world. In early days it was austere; Moses ground the golden calf to powder and made the people drink it down; Elijah the Tishbite, who dressed in skins and ate the food of the desert, could bring fear and trembling at a moment's notice upon the luxuriating Ahab. All the prophets previous to the Exile had much to say against the fashions and extravagances of the wealthy. Their constant effort was to bring the people back to the simplicity of life and faith originally revealed as Israel's especial treasure. Even in New Testament times John the Baptist was known as a second Elijah, and Jesus thrust from him the threefold temptation of material possessions and bodily ease, of fame, and of worldly authority.

[1] Jer. 9 : 4. Badé's translation.

# CHAPTER XXI

## THE AGRICULTURAL PERIOD AND ITS SOCIAL TRANSITION

The Israelites did realize after some very severe lessons that they must act together and must all be concerned with the fate of each tribe, just as our own colonies realized after a while that for the good of each it was absolutely necessary to federate. The prophet Samuel was the first to grasp the necessity of some kind of a national organization. When they first came back from Egypt some succeeded in holding the ground they wanted. Others had to shift somewhat before they became permanently settled, as, for example, the tribe of Dan. The Danites coveted the fertile plain occupied by the Philistines, but they could not succeed in wrenching it from them and getting a foothold on the coast. They soon gave up the undertaking and travelled to the extreme north, just under the Lebanons, where they captured a city called Laish and settled there, renaming the city Dan; thus during Hebrew history the expression "from Dan to Beersheba" meant from the extreme north to the extreme south of the country. None of the Israelites had accomplished the complete defeat of their enemies, who were still in the land in various spots. When they chose their various territories they expected to fight their common cause together no matter which tribe was attacked. But before many years they had forgotten their promises or considered them outgrown, and each tribe was doing what suited it best. Of course the enemies took advantage of this and a lawless state of society ensued.

**Beginning of Federated Organization.** Even before Samuel, Gideon had seen the importance of a better way of managing tribal affairs and succeeded in rallying scattered farmers to one concerted effort in which they won the victory over the Midian-

ites. These nomadic people made raids on the fields and flocks of the Israelites wherever they found it convenient. This border-land was always a portion of the country to be vigilantly watched even down to New Testament times, for in the first century A.D. we find John the Baptist imprisoned by Herod in the castle of Machærus, a stronghold on one of the hills east of the Dead Sea, erected some time before for the purpose of guarding against Arab invaders. In the earlier times, however, there were no strongholds for the purpose of defense.

**Gideon and the Eastern Tribes.** After the Israelites who lived on the border had been repeatedly attacked by these thieving hordes, one man, Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, was sufficiently stirred to send out a call to the men of his own and neighboring tribes. Through the strategy of Gideon the enemy was completely routed with a very small force. He then decided that he would make it easier to do it the next time, and so set up a tribal organization. The people of that section rallied around him and asked him to form a petty kingdom and rule over them. Thus Gideon had the opportunity to demonstrate the real necessity of some kind of authority and government. It was an object-lesson to the whole nation, and while the petty kingdom fell to pieces as soon as Gideon died, the idea had begun to take root in the minds of the people as a whole, so that they were ready a little later to organize themselves into a nation.

**Samuel's Foresight.** Then Samuel realized the value of such an organization and applied it to all the tribes. He had gained his knowledge of the critical situation of the Israelites because of his position as an itinerant judge. This was a self-appointed task, or rather one conceded to him by popular regard. Any man or woman in those troublous days who showed himself wise enough to advise people judiciously was welcomed to their villages and sought for by special messengers to settle their difficulties. Samuel had proved himself such a wise counsellor that he was called "the Seer" and "the man of God," and he saw without question that the most needed step which Israel must take or soon disintegrate, entirely losing

all their cherished hopes of becoming a nation, was to select some leader, a general who could hold the loyalty of all, even the remotest tribe. He realized that it was even necessary to bind all the tribes together in some sort of national government if they were ever to succeed in holding their own against the many hostile forces around them. Samuel was a foresighted leader. The ability he possessed for statesmanlike vision soon superseded his first reputation as a mere "seer" or diviner of events, and he came to occupy one of the most important positions any man ever held in the formation of a nation. Samuel not only saw the need; he also found the man for the place. It was he who selected Saul as a young man especially fitted for the work of the first king, and he stood as the Nestor for both king and people until after David had been introduced to his career.

The governing of a people who are just awakening to national consciousness is never an easy task, as the United States has found out in the government of the Philippines. Samuel had an exceedingly hard problem to solve in those ancient times when he attempted to discover a way to govern the people so that they would hold together and yet not do defiance to their spirit of independence. The government of the Israelites up to this time had been what is known as a theocracy, that is, a government with God at the head. Yahweh was recognized as their leader and lord, and the training that Moses had endeavored to give was all based upon that idea. He was God's representative and tried to guide the people as God desired, but in no sense did he assume kingly honor for himself. It was an attempt at democratic government, and there were many democratic features about the early history of the Hebrews. The natural independence of the nomadic peoples lent itself to the development of this type of government. To-day in Arabia a Bedouin sheik is elected by his tribe to be their leader. It is not an hereditary office. In accordance with this custom Samuel brought the whole assembly of people together to confirm his selection of Saul as a leader. The kingship was at first considered an elective not an hereditary office. David, the

successor of Saul, was an elected ruler, although Saul wished very much that his own house should keep the throne. This accounts in large measure for the boldness of the northern tribes in seceding a little later, when the young king, Rehoboam, became too insolent and overbearing.

**Saul's Task.** But what kind of a young man was desirable as the first king? He must be one who could rally all the tribes around him in battle; that was the one essential. The Israelites knew little of the arts of national government at this stage in their development. Saul seemed to have the requisites for the leadership then needed; he was physically strong and handsome, with the kind of daring which roused the admiration of youthful blood. Saul was just the kind of young man to attract and rally around him the fighting forces of those twelve half-civilized, half-barbaric tribes. With his splendid physique and commanding presence and skill in battle he at first called forth popular enthusiasm.

National rather than tribal consciousness began now to take possession of the people. They began to think in terms of national welfare. But Saul was a farmer king. At the beginning of his reign he conceived of his office as that of a general in time of war more than as an administrator in time of peace. He was a good warrior, and whenever the enemies menaced his people he was up and doing, rallying his forces about him with vigor and enthusiasm. He made a splendid general, but that was his one forte. He had no capital but his own farm at Gibeah. This was on the top of a high hill with a commanding view. Since he was a farmer king, when the exigencies of war called him out he rallied the troops around him and fought valiantly, so that they were more successful in keeping their enemies at bay than ever before, but as soon as any particular danger was over he and the rest of the soldiers went home to their farms and their own private pursuits. Had he been able to continue this policy the kingdom would have become naught but a military state and Israel's mission would have been lost. Later the nucleus of a regular army was brought together, with regular officers, and Saul made an attempt at real organization.

But as national affairs advanced and national consciousness grew, he found himself unequal to the task of organizing a government.

Samuel had realized after a while that Saul was bound to prove a disappointment. He therefore looked about for a successor who could develop this infant nation into a strong, self-sufficient power. The young shepherd lad, David, appeared to him as having such possibilities.

**David the Ideal King.** David showed great abilities in warfare and also as an administrator of domestic affairs. He was a better leader than Saul at this juncture, truly a genius in many ways, for he had a most difficult task, that of superseding his friend and benefactor, King Saul, of rallying and uniting the people enthusiastically around him, of carrying on the fight Saul had only begun against the enemies, and of organizing the people for peace and prosperity by encouraging industry and educating them up to higher ideals of living. This last was perhaps the greatest task of all, for when he came to the throne the people were still half-barbaric and all of them a rural people, agriculturists in interests, but with many of their nomadic habits of independence. He himself spent his boyhood tending sheep, and he looked upon the duties of a king as the duties of a great shepherd. He left his country home and established his capital at the ancient fortress of Jerusalem. This became a city in the real sense, and by the time his sons were grown the city life of Jerusalem had become very attractive. But David's sympathies were with the rural communities. He had a genius for organization, and he organized his kingdom in the interests of the farmer. So successfully did he ward off the neighboring enemies that almost the entire land of Palestine was under his control and the agriculturist in the more remote districts had comparative peace of mind in raising his crops. If invaders did molest him it did not take long for David to be at the scene of the trouble with his men.

The most significant thing in David's career was the fact that he laid the foundation for an educational system. Not until his time do we hear of any school of writers, although we know

there was a young man in Gideon's day who could write and David's captain of the army knew how to read and write.[1] But David established a school of scribes and systematic historical records began to be kept. This developed later into those schools that recorded the early traditions and folk-stories handed down hitherto by word of mouth from one generation to another.

David gave inspiration and direction to the one great art possessed by the Hebrews aside from poetry, namely, music. "They must have been a people of an unusually musical temperament whose daily nourishment was song and sound. On this point the Old Testament itself leaves little room for doubt." [2] The picture of these rural people singing at their work in the fields and vineyards, and at their festivals and marriage ceremonies as well as in their worship, shows a comparatively happy people. It is thought that later other nations recognized the musical ability of the Hebrews, for on one of the Assyrian tablets mention is made of the men and women singers King Hezekiah sent to Nineveh, and one of our Psalms[3] is a lament over the treatment of the Hebrew captives at Babylon who were required to sing the beautiful songs of Zion. The Chronicler tells us that David, who had marked musical ability, saw the possibilities of this national gift as a powerful factor in socializing and unifying the nation and creating national enthusiasm. Sooner or later, at any rate, they had national hymns and an organized orchestra, and the temple service became more and more enriched as their history proceeds.

**David's Accomplishments.** David had three great undertakings upon his hands. He must completely drive out the enemies that the people might have peace. The Philistines were the most troublesome of these, even encroaching upon the central plateau, but David dealt them such decisive blows that they retreated to the coast never to harry the Hebrews again as they had in the past. He must also extend the boundaries of his kingdom, and this he did, reaching points farther north and south than were ever attained after him, thus setting gen-

[1] Judges 8 : 14, marginal reading. II Sam. 11 : 14.
[2] Cornill, *The Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 102. [3] Psalm 137.

erous limits to what the Israelites considered their rightful territory. Finally, he saw that he must bring order out of confusion, so far as internal government was concerned, by systematizing and organizing affairs at the capital. The record tells us that he not only instituted a standing army and appointed a "captain of the host," or commander-in-chief, but had also a prime minister, a secretary of the treasury, of agriculture, and of forestry, and a recorder.[1] According to tradition, David was also the father of the artistic and literary movement which developed later into the body of literature which we call our Bible. David thus became the ideal king in the eyes of these rural people. No wonder that they looked back upon him as such and ever afterward in times of stress and strain believed him to be the prototype of their great Deliverer to come, the Messiah. And yet David was very human. As we read the history of his life in the light of our present-day standards, his faults seem glaring indeed. We must remember, however, that Oriental ethics of the tenth century B.C. were not what Christian standards have established for the twentieth century A.D.

In the books of Samuel, which contain the David-Saul stories, we have the most vivid pictures of a purely agricultural nation: Saul himself hunting for his father's asses; David following the sheep; Abigail, the queen of the countryside, covering up the gross churlishness of her drunken husband, Nabal, by hastening after David with presents of fruit and grain and sheep. When David came to build his palace his own people could not furnish the masons and carpenters; they must be borrowed from King Hiram of Phœnicia. This was true also when Solomon built his magnificent temple. The book of Kings tells us that while the Israelites could by this time furnish some of the builders, others were imported, and the skilful worker in brass who made the capitals for the pillars and the handsome ornamentation for the whole structure, wreaths of hanging work and figures of lions and cherubims and engravings of all sorts, "nets of

[1] II Sam. 8 : 15–18; I Chron. 27 : 25–34. The Chronicler's statements are not so reliable as those of Samuel.

checker-work and wreaths of chainwork"—the skilful artisan who did this work came from Tyre. Solomon also paid for all this, and the Lebanon timber Hiram furnished, with foodstuffs raised on the farms, "twenty thousand measures of wheat and twenty thousand measures of pure oil" every year. Many of the Israelites were still a pastoral people, needing a large territory for grazing purposes and not yet having learned the economy of space which the intensive farmer develops, but they had practically left behind the nomadic stage and settled down to a stationary agricultural life, with homes in groups for common defense and neighbors close at hand.

**Change in Social and Economic Relationships.** This change in the mode of living necessitates a closer social relationship and advance in ideas of property with a resulting change in the laws and government and a more highly developed idea of home life. A permanent home encourages accumulation and laying up for a rainy day. The hand-to-mouth method of living which a wandering people must necessarily follow gives way to greater comfort and assurance for the future. Soon there comes a release of certain men for special industries and a differentiation of occupation. There is a greater exchange of commodities and ideas. Prosperity follows, provided the love of ease does not result in shiftlessness and the love of accumulation does not produce a selfish greed unjustly preying on the weaker members of society. An industrious, thrifty farming community presents an ideal picture in many respects. Such a farmer was Elisha, evidently, when Elijah found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. Such a farmer's wife was the Shunammite woman who kept her guest-chamber always ready for the prophet. David's father was such a man, able to send an ephah of grain, ten loaves, and ten cheeses to the captain of the company under whom his sons were fighting.

**Beginning of Agricultural Life.** Once established in Canaan, the Israelites quickly learned the art of agricultural living. The Canaanites doubtless taught them many things. In the first place they must live in villages, even though farmers, for the sake of protection against robbers and wild beasts. There

was no isolated farm life such as we know in America. It was a community affair. The family idea with which they were imbued as nomads fitted into this economic necessity now that they had settled down as landowners. In the morning the men and often the women, too, would be seen going forth to the fields, and at evening all would come home again within the village walls.

**Israelites Not Manufacturers.** The villages developed certain simple industries and trade was known within limited bounds. The Canaanites had developed industries and arts beyond anything the Israelites knew. The Israelites were not long, however, in learning how to build houses and make cisterns as well as plant vineyards and olive-trees. Specialists, of course, were developed, and we find certain streets named after them. For example, in Jerusalem the Tyropœan Valley was occupied by dairies and therefore called the "Valley of Cheesemongers," and another road out of the city passed by "the fuller's field." The necessities of life—fuel, light, food, clothing—were much more easily provided than with us, and the land was evidently much more fertile than Palestine is today, owing to greater rainfall and more intensive cultivation. Merchant caravans from Egypt and Damascus passed through and market-places sprang up along the route. A certain amount of bartering was carried on, but there was no coined money until after the Exile, exchange of products and money by weight constituting the methods of trade. There were good deposits of clay in southwestern Palestine, so that the art of making pottery was learned to some extent, but the Israelites never invented an original design. Their talents did not lie in art or mechanics, for even the tunnel they cut in Jerusalem for an aqueduct was not straight, and when there was need for artificers or designers they were imported. Limestone, of which there was plenty, was used as building stone, and lime was wastefully made by burning the stone. There is no mineral wealth in Palestine, only a little lead and copper in the Lebanons, and manufactures there never flourished. The Canaanites became known as the merchants of the country; the Israelites throughout their history were chiefly agriculturists.

**A People of the Soil.** Wheat and barley, olives and grapes, sheep and hides were the staple products. They knew certain ways of irrigating the fields and made use of water-wheels, but of course their agricultural implements were of the crudest. They did not use horses to any extent until Solomon's time. The camel and the ass were the animals mostly used. A white ass was so unusual that it was kept for men to ride who occupied honored positions. But people travelled on foot very largely. They would gather together for their annual festivals in celebration of the springtime or the harvest, and the streets would resound with folk-song and gayety. Isaiah's Vineyard Song was probably in imitation of this custom. They were distinctly a people of the soil. Their literature is full of figures of speech drawn from the grain-fields and the olive-trees and the refreshing dew which was such a boon to the farmer or the blighting locust which devastated his crops. They were in their early days prosperous farmers. Debt was considered a great misfortune, and the poor man who had to borrow was charged no interest. This was not because the custom was unknown in those days, for we find that old Babylonian contracts stipulated an exorbitant rate, even as high as forty per cent. Later it was reduced to twenty per cent. But the reasons for the law against interest among the Hebrews were probably two. Money was not borrowed by these farming people for investment or speculative purposes. It was only because they were in need of the wherewithal to live. Borrowing was therefore not on a mercantile but a charity basis. And the bond of kinship made it a shame to take advantage of one's brother in need. When the Israelites began to have trade relationships with the Phœnicians and other commercial nations they were allowed to charge the foreigner a good interest. The consideration shown the poor in Israel has always been a marked characteristic. The debtor or his family might be sold to pay his debt, and this was the way Hebrew slaves came into existence, but, as we have seen, there were laws to protect him and his term of service was short.

**Ethical Standards.** At the close of this strictly agricultural period we find ethical standards have advanced on the whole

from those evidently current at the end of the nomadic period. From the two narratives of the same events, one representing the early attitude and the other the later, we judge that the deception characteristic of nomadic life was giving place to the idea that lying and stealing were wrong. This is brought out, for example, in the two accounts of the way Jacob secured his flocks from his father-in-law, Laban, one naïvely telling of Jacob's slyness in increasing his number, the other declaring that God blessed him with the increase because of his faithfulness. However, this ethical perception had not yet reached the women, for they are represented in the later narrative as using feminine wiles to outwit their relatives as well as enemies. Human sacrifice, which was accepted earlier as legitimate, is discountenanced. Yahweh, their God, is represented as a more humane and justice-loving deity. This conception of a justice-loving God is the increasingly effective weapon in the hands of the prophets of the next stage of development. As they meditated upon the real meaning of justice their ethical standards grew.

We may then consider the Hebrew people during the agricultural period as independent, prosperous, happy family groups doing whatever they did in community circles. They were always chiefly a people of the countryside; the large cities were never numerous. The resources of the country have always been agricultural rather than mineral, and whatever commerce developed with other nations was based upon exchange of grain or fruit or wool for the desired articles of other lands. One exception to this rule was the fishing interests of the Sea of Galilee, which furnished the most delicious fish of all the Mediterranean shores.

**Urban Customs in the Capital.** It was not so very long, however, after David's day before Jerusalem became a fashionable and luxurious place. Into this capital, under the worldly ambitions of Solomon, the urban customs of foreign capitals were introduced, and great display was supported by taxing the people of the rural districts.

Solomon was not so wise as his father. As he looked about

him among the nations it was their display and luxury that impressed him. He therefore aped foreign customs, establishing a harem, spending great sums upon his building operations, and finally succeeded in making Jerusalem such an attractive capital from an Oriental standpoint that even the Queen of Sheba envied him. All this, however, demanded resources. The Oriental method of raising money was, as with us, by taxation. In those days, however, a king could be an autocrat; he need not consult the willingness of his subjects to be taxed. Thus Solomon sowed the seeds of future discontent which broke out after his death as soon as his weak son, Rehoboam, assumed the throne. With exorbitant taxation on the one hand and compulsory labor on the other, Solomon's subjects were in the main practically his slaves. Over his many gangs of workmen he had appointed one of their own number. This was Jeroboam, a keen, quick-witted man and natural leader. Jeroboam was quick to feel the discontent among his fellow laborers even in Solomon's lifetime.

He attempted to take advantage of this and help them to revolt in order to make another kingdom with himself at the head. Solomon learned of his plans and exiled him to Egypt, but as soon as the king was dead the people called Jeroboam back to lead them in their labor strike against the overbearing young Rehoboam. This new king was the spoiled child of an Oriental court who lacked at the same time the tact in managing men that his father had shown. He added insult to injury in the way he treated his subjects, already uneasy under their heavy burdens. He forgot that they had not lost the old spirit that caused them to escape from Egyptian slavery; he forgot also that the kingship itself was originally an elective office.

**A Labor Strike.** Thus when Jeroboam presented himself at this juncture as a man of the people, championing the cause of labor, he was able to lead ten of the tribes away from their loyalty to Jerusalem and to the king of Jerusalem. Only the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, that Solomon had kept devoted to himself because of exemption from taxation and taskwork, still remained faithful to Rehoboam. As soon as the

kingdom split and the northern tribes seceded from the south, they too set up a capital which became the centre of city life and city luxuries. Other smaller places became market centres, merchants developed trade and commerce, and with all this came wealth and distinction between classes of society.

**Introduction of City Life.** Soon the example of an ease-loving, luxuriating court at the capital spread further than the immediate circle of the king. Wealth was an object to be sought for at the expense of the peasant. Exorbitant taxes were required to support the government. Social inequalities began to appear, and, as time went on and more men became ambitious for wealth, field was laid to field and big estates were acquired by landowners who cared not how they acquired them. The unscrupulous example of a Queen Jezebel in securing Naboth's vineyard for her much-desired cucumber garden was followed too often in spirit by the rich who were becoming richer. Perhaps the sight of the importance and power of the chief of a large family with much land under his jurisdiction aroused the latent covetousness in many breasts. At any rate, the old law that the land belonged to Yahweh, to be administered by the heads of families for the benefit of all concerned, gave way before the greed of those strong enough to snatch away the right of possession. Especially in the Northern Kingdom was confiscation easy because of the frequent political uprisings and revolutions. City life, with its ease and pleasures, was considered the goal of the ambitious, and class distinctions began to rise between rich and poor, landowner and peasant, merchant and soldier, city man and country man.

# CHAPTER XXII

## HEBREW CITY LIFE BEFORE THE CAPTIVITY

The city-life stage is the third stage into which we are introduced by the prophets and in the books of Kings and Chronicles. What kind of a picture is presented? We need briefly to note the forces that were pushing the Hebrews into this type of life.

National life was seldom peaceful during this period of ancient history. If a country was not fighting for its own existence it was planning how it could make conquest of other nations. The little provinces of Palestine were not exempt from the greedy desires of the stronger nations around them, and when internal conflicts were added there remained only brief periods of respite from war and strife. Partly because of the manner in which the Northern Kingdom started, as a usurpation of authority, partly because of its more accessible territory, this northern division of the Hebrew nation seemed to be in a constant broil of civil war or in perpetual need of external defense. Assassinations and the usurpation of the throne by some upstart army officer were common occurrences until short reigns were the rule.

**Omri's Capital.** But amidst these turmoils a man arose by the name of Omri who founded a dynasty and was so strong that foreign nations called the whole country by his name, "the land of Omri," as we have learned from Moabite and Assyrian tablets. It was he who chose a sightly location for the permanent capital upon a hill that lent itself easily to defense, calling it Samaria, which originally meant "an outlook." This capital in its palmy days was noted for its fashionable, luxurious life. The prophets used it as a warning to the people of Jerusalem. It was called by Isaiah "the crown of pride of

the drunkards of Ephraim," Ephraim being another name for the Northern Kingdom. Israel also was now used to denote the Northern Kingdom in distinction from Judah or the Southern Kingdom.

**Ahab's Policy.** When Omri's son Ahab came to the throne he went further than any previous king in the policy of doing as the world does and catering to foreign ideas. He married the daughter of the king of Tyre, the Queen Jezebel who always stood as the embodiment of worldly wickedness in the eyes of the orthodox Israelite. She was stronger than her husband and overruled him in her plans for personal gain and pleasure. She brought in her own type of worship and greatly resented any suggestion that hers was not the right religion or the proper mode of life. She insisted upon her foreign ideas, that the kingdom was for the benefit of the rulers and that they were to live in luxury and display and have every whim gratified. It was during the long reign of Ahab and Jezebel that Elijah, the prophet, appeared to protest against such indifference to the claims of Yahweh, the Hebrew God of justice. This moral conflict between the prophet and the king was of much import in the development of the great prophets and of true religion.

The protest of the prophet may have had great effect upon individuals or upon certain groups but not upon the kingdom as a whole. On it raced in its mad career of worldly life, listening to the siren call of foreign immoralities until the vital strength of the people was so weakened that it could no longer withstand the encroachments of the enemy. It lasted, however, for more than a century after Ahab's death. The succeeding kings had comparatively short reigns and many turmoils and fears of foreign foes. Syria and Assyria were both hovering over this Northern Kingdom like great vultures. If the people were not harassed by wars there was tribute to pay, and if hostilities with foreign nations subsided then they picked a quarrel with the Southern Kingdom and fell to fighting again.

**The Influence of the Prophet.** Elisha succeeded Elijah in the prophetic office of counsellor to kings and friend of the

people. He is a very picturesque figure against this sordid background of jealousy and strife, showing that true religion was not wholly dead. He was considered so wise a man that his advice was sought for, not only by Israel but by Judah also, and even by an eminent officer in the Syrian army, and his shrewd political insight was considered a valuable asset to the kingdom. He, like his predecessor Samuel, set up and put down kings and was the most influential person in the whole realm.

**Prosperity Under Jeroboam II.** In the latter part of this period, about twenty years after Elisha's death, there appeared a king who was able to hold things together for nearly forty years. This was Jeroboam II. External conditions were such that Israel's most formidable foes, Assyria and Syria, were occupied elsewhere and Jeroboam had a chance to develop her internal resources and bring about a degree of prosperity unknown since David's day. This is the period of the palmiest and most alluring days of the city-life stage.

**The Southern Kingdom.** In the meantime national affairs had progressed in the Southern Kingdom and the capital, Jerusalem, had become a centre of urban extravagance. A bitter feeling had been created by the withdrawal of the ten tribes, and for a long time it was actively expressed in hostilities of various sorts. Judah set the example of appealing for outside aid in an early struggle with the north. But it was always a bad policy for these small cities to call in a foreign power to help; it simply gave an opportunity for further invasion and the exaction of tribute. Judah paid Syria for her service with the treasures of the temple and palace, and it did not take long for surrounding nations to realize that there were treasures there desirable to possess. Sometimes a friendly alliance was made between the north and the south and they would act together for a while. This was King Jehoshaphat's policy, and he tried to make it permanent by marrying his son to the daughter of Ahab. But this queen was too much like her mother, Jezebel. She sought to bring into Jerusalem the same type of life Jezebel had brought into the Northern Kingdom.

The prophets denounced this alliance as a league with unholy powers, and it certainly caused trouble enough in the lowering of morals and then a revolt and a period of insurrection. This experience confirmed the prophets in their conviction that the Northern Kingdom was apostate and that its example was to be shunned rather than imitated. This disturbance quieted down and affairs went comparatively smoothly for a while, but before long new broils were started with the sister nation. There was constant jealousy. Jerusalem considered herself the original capital and seat of authority for the entire land. But while she prided herself upon guarding the simon-pure brand of Hebrew religion and morals she was at the same time very susceptible to the worldly gains that came to the Northern Kingdom, with their policy of being people of the world.

**Uzziah's Success.** Finally a strong man by the name of Uzziah succeeded to the throne at Jerusalem. His was a long reign of about fifty years and practically contemporaneous with that of Jeroboam II in the Northern Kingdom. He was very wise and successful in his plans of defense and in his encouragement of internal industries. He drove back the encroaching tribes on the eastern and western and southern border-lands, established fortresses on the outskirts of his territory, and invented engines of defense to be placed on the battlements. He succeeded in gaining the port of Elath, on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, as an outlet for the commerce of his country. This encouragement to commerce caused a rapid growth of the merchant class. At the same time he fostered agriculture at home. We are told that "he loved husbandry" and "hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle . . . and had husbandmen and vine-dressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields." Jeroboam II was now pushing his territory northward and creating a prosperous condition throughout the Northern Kingdom. Both kings encouraged building operations and made their capitals, Jerusalem and Samaria, cities of splendor and luxury, and smaller cities followed their example. However, Uzziah was more true to the purer type of religion represented in the Southern Kingdom, while Jeroboam II, we are

told, "departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat," who was, of course, Jeroboam I.

**Progress in Civilization.** Thus during this half century both kingdoms were in a state of peace and prosperity such as they had not known since the days of David. Moreover, civilization among the Hebrews had progressed rapidly in these two hundred years. With a little better understanding of government and what is involved in being a nation, there had developed a political, military, and priestly organization which the people took for granted. With the extension of industries and trade there had arisen distinct classes in society—a merchant class, an agricultural class, a military class, a priestly class. This, of course, led to class distinctions, so that gaps were felt between rich and poor, city man and country man. The prophets had much to say about this, as we shall see later. They did their best to ward off the evils which follow such a state of society and to keep the people from settling down into self-satisfied contentment and luxurious disregard of the sterner demands of justice and righteousness. In the meantime, however, the people were very proud of their kings, Uzziah and Jeroboam II, and revelled in their newly acquired state of peace and prosperity. They very nearly forgot that it might not last always and that the same old enemies were still hovering on their border ready to pounce down upon them as soon as opportunity should offer.

**The Prophet's Picture of This Period.** At this juncture four of the most brilliant prophets the Hebrew people ever produced appeared, to utter warnings concerning the dangers of such a life. The prophet Amos, who lived in the eighth century B.C., in the prosperous reign of King Uzziah, gives us some very graphic glimpses of this period. He was a plain countryman who doubtless came periodically to the marketplaces to dispose of his sheep. In these cities he found such luxury and extravagance, such carousing and utter disregard of the rights of the poor, that his contempt could not contain itself. He tells us that the rich people in the cities of Samaria and Bethel lounge upon couches and beds of ivory covered with

silken cushions, that they have at least four kinds of houses, to suit the seasons and their tastes—winter houses, summer houses, houses of ivory, and great houses—that they are epicures and fops, requiring the choicest meats, drinking heavily, and anointing themselves with the most expensive oils. But they care not how they get their money for all this extravagance. They will "sell the needy for a pair of shoes" and trample upon the poor. They tax him exorbitantly and then turn and bribe his judges. The women are as bad as their husbands, thoughtlessly oppressing the poor and crushing the needy and revelling in drink. A very unattractive picture it is of the state of society. Class distinctions had been allowed to grow up and the breach between rich and poor widened more and more.

The prophet Micah gives us a hint as to how this came about. He says men "covet fields and seize them and houses and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage"; they "build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity"; and these rich men of the city are handing out "a scant measure" for their purchases, "wicked balances," "a bag of deceitful weights." He says they devise these evil schemes "because it is in the power of their hand." That is, the time has come when men in power see the advantages of large estates, and that the only way to secure them is to disregard the primitive law of inheritance and buy out the poor man. Isaiah, who lived at the same time as Micah, described the same thing. He says: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land." It was something like our big ranchmen of the Western States crowding out the small ranchmen a few years ago. It looks as if they were having a monopoly of land interests for the benefit of the rich who had their luxurious homes in the large centres and that these real-estate sharks were taking advantage of the poor farmers by cheating them in the price they paid. Micah must have known the conditions, for he was a countryman himself, living some twenty-five miles from Jerusalem, probably one of

these small farmers who refused to sell out. About this time also it was necessary to make a law concerning the obliteration of landmarks which were placed instead of fences to mark off the boundary lines of a man's fields. "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee to possess it." [1] This plainly shows the practice of trying to remove all trace of the small owner's claim and to build up a kind of feudal system, for these rich proprietors evidently left the original farmer on his land as a tenant, to pay out a large portion of each year's crops in heavy taxes to them. Amos accuses them of taking exactions of wheat from the poor man and of even selling back to him the refuse which was valueless.[2]

These prophets from the country, Amos and Micah, would naturally look at affairs from the poor man's point of view. But Isaiah's picture is similar, although he was a city man, born in the aristocratic circles of Jerusalem in a position to represent the rich man's side. Yet he also cannot say enough against the state of society that has grown up which to him seems very unnatural. He tries to remind the people that their country does not seem adapted to the fashions and luxuries of the commercial nations around them and that they would be much better off to be content with the quiet, simple life of their fathers. He is especially impatient with the shallow-minded women whose thoughts are only upon fashionable frivolities. Society must indeed have been in a very degraded state, for he accuses even the priests and teachers of being drunk upon the streets.

All the prophets of this period picture a people with two extremes of society: a newly rich class quite taken off their feet by their recent gains, dwelling in self-indulgence and indifferent to consequences, and a poor peasant class ground under the heel of the prosperous and exploited on all sides by the unscrupulous ruling classes. The service of God now came to be a mere form. People thought that by keeping the letter of the

[1] Deut. 19 : 14. [2] Amos 5 : 11; 8 : 6.

law and going through prescribed ceremonies they could perform all their religious obligations. They lost sight of the fact that God requires a religion of the heart and justice in everyday human relations. They even forgot to be brotherly to their own kin. Micah's great definition of true religion was born out of such conditions, when men were very punctilious over their sacrifices and tithes and religious festivals but could hardly wait till the Sabbath was over to cheat their neighbors. Thus starting with their relations to one another and the need of justice at home, the prophets by degrees began to see that the law of individual rights and human justice extended beyond their own border to all men. This broad vision, however, could not be taken at once. It required many hard experiences before even the keenest-sighted of them caught this truth.

**Social Degeneration.** In the meantime the nation worried along with most unwholesome social conditions, with idleness and pleasure the great aims of the upper classes and a mere subsistence the best hope of the discontented poor. When we realize that it was only owners of land who held the rights of citizenship it becomes apparent how great was the power in the hands of the few who owned vast estates. But this kind of life soon told upon the stamina of the country. Isaiah very pointedly gives this as the reason for the fall of Samaria before the Assyrian hosts. "The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot; and the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up." The Northern Kingdom was always more open to the temptations to live as foreigners lived. They had not so high religious ideals and were not as a rule so loyal to the standards of the prophets of Yahweh.

Among the great prophets who left written records only one seems to have had his home in this Northern Kingdom. That was Hosea, and he accuses his people of being as fickle as the morning dew in their loyalty to Yahweh. Very pathetically he represents God as saying: "When Israel was a child, then I

loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them; they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arm; but they knew not that I healed them." It must be remembered that the standards which the prophets preached were standards of social justice. With them religion had to do here and now with treating one's fellow men justly. And the adoption of foreign religions brought with it foreign social standards which were never democratic. Hosea charges the people to turn to their God and "keep kindness and justice" while they are boasting that they are rich and wealthy. "Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and builded palaces." "They have deeply corrupted themselves." He says that "Ephraim is like a silly dove without understanding," not realizing how this social corruption is going to weaken their life as a nation. He says "Ephraim is a cake not turned," that is, half baked and doughy on one side at least, because her social standards were so unwholesome. He declares that Israel's religion is very shallow, for they seem to think they can sin and sin again, and yet God will forgive them although they keep right on in their evil ways. Such a superficial conception of repentance do they hold and such an inadequate idea of God's requirements. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," he cries. And Isaiah later told his fellow-citizens in Jerusalem that if they kept on refusing to see the kind of life that was best for them to live in order to preserve their strength as a nation, but invited foreigners and foreign customs within their borders, they would soon be overrun, nay, even overwhelmed, by their enemies, just as a great river bursting its banks sweeps everything before it, so that men find themselves suddenly caught in the flood and well-nigh drowned.[1] This was precisely what happened. They turned away from the wholesome, democratic, independent life of their rural ancestors and sought the wealth, the luxuries, and display of foreign cities, without enough of the real knowledge of the world to cope with foreign aggressions

[1] Isaiah 8 : 5–8.

nor enough of the sense of justice to prevent extremes of oppression and wide gaps within their own social groups. Their whole social structure thus became honeycombed, ready to collapse when any heavy strain should test its solidity.

This condition of things in the history of the Hebrew nation as it passed from the agricultural to the city-life stage is not without its warnings to our own generation. To quote from Professor Willett: "The city is the great social problem of our age, and Isaiah is the Old Testament specialist on that theme. The sins of the city, its volatile and vibrant life, its opulence, and its pride, all find place in his thought and speech. Our modern city problems are more complex than were those of his time, for sin, which was then largely individual, is to-day organized and exploited for profit. But the eternal principles which Isaiah applied to the evils of his day are the principles for our age and for all time." [1]

[1] Herbert L. Willett, *The Religious and Social Ideals of Israel.*

# CHAPTER XXIII

## EFFECT OF THE CHANGED CONDITIONS UPON THE NATION

**Fall of Samaria.** After the strong kings, Uzziah and Jeroboam II, had passed away, opportunity offered for the greedy nations hovering near to pounce down upon this land. Both kingdoms were then more or less weakened by their self-indulgences, just as the prophets had predicted. The Northern Kingdom was the first to succumb to the renewed assaults of the foreign foe, Assyria. It utterly collapsed in 722 B.C. The Southern Kingdom persisted more than a century longer, but with the growing menace of ignominious failure as a kingdom and surrender to foreign dictation. Assyria had been growing stronger and more aggressive, swallowing up all the little neighboring provinces. Finally her armies camped in front of Samaria, Israel's capital city, and conducted a three years' siege, until the spirit of the Northern Kingdom was broken, and "this crown of pride," "the glorious city at the head of the fat valley," proved only a "fading flower," compelled to surrender to the enemy. These ten tribes that were subjugated and many of them carried away into Assyria and scattered there are known as "the ten lost tribes." They were absorbed into the life of the conquering nation, so that their political identity was never again recognized. The siege of Samaria had begun under Shalmaneser IV. It was completed under Sargon in 722 B.C., who then pushed his victory southward, aiming at the conquest of Egypt, capturing Philistine strongholds on the coast. He was followed by Sennacherib, who conducted an extensive campaign through Palestine.

During these operations the prophets were clear-sighted enough to see that Jerusalem was in great danger. This was

the era of the greatest prophetic oratory the Bible contains. These men were so stirred by the exigencies of the situation that inspired words sprang from their lips, messages that probed beneath mere appearances to the real ground of faith the Hebrews had in a protecting God of justice and love. The prophets themselves advanced from one step to another until they came to realize that "the chosen people" were not bound to be victorious simply because they had Yahweh for their God, but that God was himself the ultimate ruler, to be triumphant in the end over all wicked nations because of his character. If the people allied themselves with God by upholding moral action they would have part in the final triumph, but otherwise they would be lost as the ten tribes of the north had been lost in the struggle. It was only a "remnant," loyal to the high ideals of character that would finally survive. This prediction came true.

**Change of Attitude.** In the meantime the people were not quite so self-complacent as they had been. Their smugness of attitude gave place to fear and trembling. When King Ahaz was threatened by the blusterings of the small nations near we read that "Ahaz's heart and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind" and that Isaiah must step in with a message of courage: "Take heed and keep calm; fear not, neither be faint-hearted." When Sennacherib's army threatened Jerusalem itself Isaiah bemoans the fact that the people that had just before been full of carousing, "a joyous town," would soon be panic-stricken. "A day of panic, of trampling and of confusion," would soon set in, and this came true.

During these days, when the kings were frightened by some hostile threat, their policy was to rush off to some foreign power, asking assistance, and thus putting themselves at their mercy and laying Judah open to demands for tribute and help in furthering foreign schemes. Isaiah counselled that Judah stay at home in her mountain fortress and mind her own legitimate business. Then there would be no danger that the Egyptian "flies" and the Assyrian "bees" would be so attracted by

the honey expected that they would swarm about Jerusalem and oppress her. Even King Hezekiah, who did much for the internal improvement of Jerusalem, who fostered literature and the best culture of the time, was easily frightened and yielded to his court advisers, who advocated seeking help from Egypt. Isaiah was very much tried with Hezekiah, and pronounced woe after woe upon his Egyptian policy, telling him that in quietness and in confidence lay his strength, but if he would not believe it and trusted the Egyptians, rather than God, Judah would find out that her allies were only weak, selfish men simply looking out for their gain and not a protecting power. The encroachments of Assyria upon all the surrounding territory became more and more serious, until finally, as told upon an Assyrian cylinder, King Sennacherib "shut up" Hezekiah in Jerusalem "as a bird in a cage." He had to pay heavy tribute. Isaiah might have said, "I told you so," but instead he stepped in with one of his most courageous and eloquent messages of hope for Jerusalem if the people would only reform their ways and trust in God.

**Manasseh's "Killing Time."** There was enough good sense left when aided by untoward turns in the affairs of Assyria so that Jerusalem escaped capture for a hundred years after Hezekiah's reign. His successor, however, reversed his father's policy of listening to the prophets. Manasseh was an apostate from the Yahweh religion, introducing foreign customs and heathenish rites and catering to the ways of the world as represented by the nations about him. "He reared up altars for the Baalim and made Asheroth, and worshipped all the host of heaven and served them. He also made his children to pass through fire. . . . He practised augury, and used enchantments, and practised sorcery, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards." [1] He was also a vassal to Assyria. He had a long reign of fifty-five years, which was especially noted for its reaction against prophetic teaching. It has been called the "killing time," so many good men were put to death. We are told that he "shed innocent blood very

[1] II Chron. 33 : 3–6. See also II Kings 21 : 2–7.

much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." There is a tradition that Isaiah was martyred at this time.

**Josiah's Reform.** But underneath this revolt from the higher ideals set forth by the prophets, and perhaps because of their persecution, the prophetic writers seem to have been active in collecting and rearranging the records of the past and especially the laws of the Yahweh religion. When Manasseh's reign was over all this came to light. His son was soon murdered by conspirators and his little grandson Josiah came to the throne under the tutelage of the priests. Josiah early showed a reverence for God and a desire for social reform. Just as soon as he was old enough to initiate any movement he instituted a house-cleaning in the temple. This was an epoch-making event, for there was found the book of the Law compiled not long before by the prophetic school, waiting for this opportune moment of discovery to have a very great effect upon the people. This book is our book of Deuteronomy, containing some of the best and most ideal laws to be found in the Old Testament. The reading of this book made a profound impression upon the young king. He called in the help of a youthful cousin of his, the intense and eager prophet Zephaniah, and together they preached and legislated until they had torn down much of the evil work of Manasseh and restored society to a much more enlightened state. But Josiah was, unfortunately, killed in the prime of life in an attempt to repulse the Egyptians who now had ambitions eastward.

**Judah a Vassal of Egypt.** Judah now became a vassal of Egypt, and her kings were subservient to Egyptian dictation until the new power of Babylonia became strong enough to besiege Nineveh and prevail over the Assyrians.

**Fall of Assyria.** This was somewhat more than a century after the fall of Samaria and after the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom had been led off to the East to become absorbed by Assyria. Babylonia now coveted all her rival had gained and threatened Jerusalem even to her gates. When Assyria's death-knell was sounded and her own proud capital, Nineveh, fell, the Hebrews were inclined to be very exultant,

expecting deliverance themselves from their constant fear of oppression. But the wisest of the prophets knew it was to be only an exchange of one tyranny for another. Babylonia would be no more merciful than Assyria had been, for might, not right, was still the god of ancient empires. This also proved a true prediction.

**Nebuchadrezzar and the Captivity.** The Egyptian forces fell into Babylonian hands at the battle of Carchemish. This, of course, meant that Palestine became theirs also. Nebuchadrezzar was now king of Babylon, and in 597 B.C. he besieged Jerusalem and sent back to Babylon the first deportation of captives. The book of Kings tells us that Nebuchadrezzar at this time carried away "all save the poorest sort of the people of the land." In the first group of captives were the best families, including some of the literary men and the king himself. Ezekiel the prophet was one of them, and when he arrived in Babylon he had something to say concerning the way things looked to him. Jeremiah, another prophet, was left at home to speak and write as best he could. He tried to clarify the thinking of the people, so befogged by disaster and abuse. Whatever philosophy of life they had held before seemed now to be overturned. Yahweh seemed not sufficiently powerful to protect their land, and Jeremiah must show them that religious faith does not hang upon the slender thread of one nation's prosperity, but upon ideals of character. At first Nebuchadrezzar was lenient enough to appoint one of Judah's own royal house as governor rather than a foreigner. But he was weak, yielding to the counsels of his short-sighted advisers instead of listening to Jeremiah.

**Fall of Jerusalem.** Egypt now thought she was strong enough to try her hand in the game of conquest if only she could induce some of the smaller provinces to go in with her and throw off the Babylonian yoke. Zedekiah, the governor, was foolishly persuaded to join her and of course brought the wrath of Nebuchadrezzar down upon his head. He swept down upon Jerusalem when he thought Zedekiah had not a humble enough attitude toward his demands. He was unsparing

now toward Jerusalem and her people and punished them nearly to their death by destroying the city and dragging into a much more menial captivity many of those who were still left there. He burned the city to the ground, temple and all, first stripping it of all its treasures. He put out the eyes of the governor, dragging him off in shackles. Over the weary way to Babylon hundreds of men and women and children were driven like cattle and put to slaves' work on the quays and magnificent buildings with which Nebuchadrezzar adorned his capital. Their homesickness was pathetic; its echoes are preserved to us in literature.

> By the rivers of Babylon,
> There we sat down, yea, we wept,
> When we remembered Zion.
> Upon the willows in the midst thereof
> We hanged up our harps.

This occurred in 586 B.C. Only Jeremiah and the dregs of society were left in Jerusalem. Nebuchadrezzar still saw fit to appoint a native governor over the land. This governor and Jeremiah were friends, but he was soon murdered, and Jeremiah escaped to Egypt, whither many refugees had fled during the persecutions. Thus we come to the period of the captivity which quite overturned the whole aspect of the history of the Hebrew people.

**The Prophet's Message.** During these two centuries which we have just surveyed a prophet would appear from time to time. He was a man gifted with especial insight into the meaning of life and the conditions of society he saw about him. He was often a man of broader vision than simply a local, national vision. He saw that the welfare of his nation and of his own people was dependent upon their attitude toward other nations. He began to have an international outlook and was often a statesman, because he not only could see what kind of a game the powers were playing but what kind of a move on the part of his own nation would save it from disaster. These

prophets, as they appeared one after another, held tenaciously to the idea that the Hebrew people were born for a life of their own, that they were to be a nation with distinctive national characteristics, cultivating their own ideas of society, creating their own national atmosphere. But their keen insight led them to see that society, in order to be stable and virile, must be sound and wholesome and that social soundness and wholesomeness depends upon ethical standards. They were men also of sufficient spiritual sensitiveness to recognize and believe in a higher spiritual power, a righteous, justice-loving God who was holding up before his people these ethical standards and demanding their allegiance to them if they pretended to be loyal to him. But as events proceeded these clear-sighted prophets had to give up one by one the cherished hopes of their ancestors in the national greatness of their race. They were too small a people to down their enemies when they did not cling together and work for the same ends, when a part of their number, and that the larger part, were too selfish and greedy for their own immediate interests and pleasure to deny themselves the self-indulgences that sapped their vigor and dulled their perceptions. As their hopes of national greatness began to wane they came gradually to concentrate their attention upon the religious mission which the loyal remnant of a once flourishing people could still fulfil. The national life was drained of its vitality because social conditions were diseased, but the flame of religious zeal grew brighter and more intense in the few who remained true to their high ideals.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## CITY LIFE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CAPTIVITY

**A New Trend in Hebrew History.** The years that Judah spent in Babylonia were epoch-making. The history of the Hebrews breaks at this point. Upon their return they were different people; in some respects broader, in other respects narrower. Their greatest leaders saw more clearly the definite mission of their people to the world; it was a religious mission. But in the accomplishment of this their creative efforts were concentrated upon a single point, were narrowed to a single issue. They could have no reasonable hopes of ever again becoming a political power, ranking among the important kingdoms of the world. They did have most reasonable expectations of developing a religious life peculiar to themselves, outstripping that of any other nation in its high standards and demands. They came back, therefore, to found a church rather than a nation, to propagate religious principles rather than to meet the world with any promise of political power. For they were a vassal to other nations from now on, save for a brief respite during the Maccabean period. This trend in their history was not always perfectly clear to all the people nor, indeed, to all the leaders, but as we look back upon it in perspective we see that this was the result.

**A More Cosmopolitan Tendency.** On the other hand, the contact with Babylonian and Persian civilization which they had gained in the East broadened their ideas in many ways, made some of them more cosmopolitan, and left its stamp upon them in ideas with which they became familiar and which they incorporated into their own thinking. This tendency to become cosmopolitan had its great dangers. Imitation of nations as well as of individuals is likely to become an imitation of the

showy and shallower characteristics and to result in a loss of one's strength. The leaders who saw this danger and who valued the definite contribution to thought and life which they believed the Hebrews were making were bitterly opposed to such dissipation of their energies. They set up a reaction against it which resulted finally in a policy of exclusiveness, in what became known later as Pharisaism, as opposed to the worldly attitude of the Sadducees. Thus two parties arose, and their strife for moral supremacy is the main thread of the history of the postexilic epoch. In order to see clearly this main thread and from what sources it arose, we need to look carefully into this period and the life that it fostered.

**The Exile.** As has been said, there were two deportations of captives from Jerusalem, the first in 597 B.C., embracing the aristocracy and including the better-educated class. These families were treated comparatively well. They were allowed to have their own homes and to follow their own pursuits more or less. Ezekiel tells us of living in his own hired house, and we know that literary men had time to preach and write.

**Conditions in Babylonia.** When in 586 B.C. the second deportation took place there was much less mercy shown. These people were set at the drudgery of slave labor in accomplishing the adornment of the city of Babylon, upon which Nebuchadrezzar was bent. But on the whole they seem to have been leniently dealt with. They were by no means reduced to the abject slavery of the Egyptian bondage. We find them given much freedom so far as their own local communities were concerned, with Jewish elders and judges to control their affairs. The prophets had liberty to speak as they chose and to encourage their people to hold true to Jewish customs. When Evil-Merodach succeeded Nebuchadrezzar to the throne he released the Jewish king, Jehoiachin, from prison "and changed his prison garments," giving him an annuity upon which to live. Many of the Hebrews were drawn into the commercial activities of this thriving country and a few, like Nehemiah, were elevated later to positions of high honor. The attractions of this new life weaned many away from their former attach-

ments. They regarded Babylonia rather than Jerusalem as their home and became absorbed into its life.

**Centres of Jewish Life.** The destruction of Jerusalem resulted in a great scattering of the Jews. Many fled to Egypt, and thus we have three Jewish centres: Palestine, the native land, still inhabited by the poorer peasant class left when Jerusalem was burned; Babylonia, where the majority of the citizens of the capital and of the most prominent families of the land had been taken as captives and where the most earnest and loyal of them were still exerting their influence to bring a nucleus back to the home land; and Egypt, a refuge from time to time for a considerable number who had escaped actual captivity and previous persecution. To this latter place such a prominent prophet as Jeremiah fled, although he was allowed to stay in Jerusalem when the great cataclysm occurred; here also the Jews were numerous enough to have a temple, remains of which have been discovered recently.

**Conditions in Jerusalem and Palestine.** The people who had been left in Jerusalem were indeed in a sorry state as pictured by a great poet of this period who was evidently an eyewitness. He laments their wretched condition in such stanzas as these:

> How the cloud of the wrath of the Lord
> Enshrouds the daughter of Zion,
> From heaven to earth hath he hurled
> The pomp of Israel.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The children are asking for bread,
> None to dispense it.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> They that were fed upon dainties
> Rot on the streets;
> They who were nourished in scarlet
> Huddle on ash-heaps.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Her princes were whiter than milk,
> More radiant than snow.

Ruddier in body than coral,
Veined with the sapphire.

Now darker than blackness their visage
Unknown as they pass,
Their skin drawn tight on their bones,
Dry as a stick.

. . . . . .

What they could not endure, they must now
Sweep with their robes.

. . . . . .

So they stagger and straggle about,
Homeless forever![1]

What a picture of the fall of the aristocracy!

Thus the Babylonian captivity wrought not only a complete change politically, it brought about also a social and economic upheaval and reconstruction. There were about fifty years between the second deportation and the return of the first captives who were allowed to turn their faces homeward. It was seventy years before the temple at Jerusalem was again rebuilt and dedicated.

This was the period when the Hebrew literary genius was fanned to a flame. The bitter experiences through which they had passed, the overturning of their philosophy concerning Yahweh's protection of "the chosen people," the new surroundings and beliefs under which they found themselves, all of these things, instead of paralyzing their thought and power of expression, seemed to quicken it. For now we find the Great Prophet of the Exile giving utterance to those wonderfully profound, spiritual, and poetic prophecies included in the last part of our book of Isaiah. Nowhere do we find a better example of the literary ability of the Hebrews. Ezekiel also was a man with a vision, gifted in expressing it under many Oriental symbols. These were both men with a message. Perhaps not all of what was said for the encouragement and warning of the

[1] See G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, for translation of Lamentations.

people was written now; possibly some portions of their books were postexilic. But they were the means of putting hope and courage into the hearts of their countrymen at this time, with the promise that there would surely be a way back to their own country and their own Holy City, there to carry on to completion the work their God had put in their hands to do.

They saw clearly also that in order to do this their own religious principles must be gathered up and systematized and that the people must be loyal to them, refusing to substitute foreign beliefs and a foreign manner of living for their own. Thus we find the same school of writers who prepared the book of Deuteronomy, which was brought to light in Josiah's reign, working now upon the entire past history of the Israelites, compiling and editing the records and traditions that had been handed down. These writers are known as "the Deuteronomic school" of prophets, and their hand is seen throughout the Hexateuch and the historical books of Samuel and Kings as they have come down to us. They were the editors of the material. In addition to this they wrote out some laws of their own. There is a short code in Leviticus 17–26, known as "the Holiness Code," which is supposed to belong to this period. Ezekiel's laws also (Ezek. 44–48) were his ideas of the way they should conduct themselves if they wished to keep their religion pure and uncorrupted by foreign influence.

**The Loyal Jews.** All of this was going on while the majority of the captives were engaged in their daily labor under their Babylonian taskmasters. Many of them were doubtless absorbed into the life of their adopted country just as the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom had been. But there were a few who remained loyal to Jerusalem and the Yahweh religion. Their homesickness for their native land is very manifest in the songs they sang. Their leaders encouraged these longings and held out hopes to them of a return. The Great Prophet of the Exile pictured this happy home-coming in such glowing colors that their mourning over present conditions was displaced by joy in anticipation of what was before them. When the Persian king, Cyrus, swept down upon Babylonia, overcoming the Baby-

Ionian ruler and absorbing all their territory into the great Persian Empire, he was hailed by these Jewish leaders as their deliverer, one sent from God to be the instrument of their release and return to Jerusalem.

**Cyrus's Policy.** This proved true, for Cyrus adopted a different policy altogether from Nebuchadrezzar. In a previous chapter we have mentioned the fact that even the greatest Semitic rulers seemed to lack the power to assimilate their conquests and make their colonies a real part of their realms, whereas Aryan or Indo-European races did possess this gift. Cyrus shows this power by his policy toward his subject peoples. So far as religion and manner of life were concerned, he was an eclectic, not only allowing every kind within his borders but priding himself upon the cosmopolitan character of his cities. Such freedom was, of course, very gratifying to the loyal Hebrews.

So far as the conduct of his provinces was concerned, he believed in self-government if only they were faithful to him as their overlord. He also believed in strengthening his frontier by making the inhabitants enthusiastic in their admiration of their sovereign. Such a policy accomplished the very end he had in view. His foreign subjects were full of praise for his greatness and his character. Their hearts were won. He not only allowed the Hebrews great freedom in Babylonia but he quickly granted their request when they asked if they might return to Jerusalem. He started the first caravan off with assistance from the government, an imperial escort and gifts to help them in their settling, and restored to them so far as possible the holy vessels carried off from their temple by Nebuchadrezzar. He also sent with them as their governor one of their own number, Zerubbabel, a descendant of their royal house. Thus Cyrus for the time being changed the entire policy of treating subject races, foreshadowing some modern lines of progress, and created a contented empire ready to fight for him when occasion offered.

**Conditions in the Persian Period.** Probably not very many availed themselves at first of this opportunity to go back to

Jerusalem. Others followed from time to time under various leaders. When they arrived they had a rather disheartening experience. Instead of realizing the beautiful Utopia their great prophet had pictured for them they found a desolate little strip of country on the barren hillsides of Judea. Perhaps they had forgotten just how barren it really was compared with the fertile fields of the Euphrates valley.

It has been estimated that at about 600 B.C. there must have been in Judah at least two hundred and fifty thousand people and that not more than sixty or seventy thousand of these were taken to Babylonia. Many of the rest were scattered but many remained in Palestine. They were not "the blue-bloods," but "the poorest of the land." Dr. George Adam Smith sums up their situation by saying that from them "every man of substance and of energy had been sifted; mere groups of peasants without a leader and without a centre; disorganized and depressed; bitten by hunger and compassed by enemies; uneducated and an easy prey to the heathenism by which they were surrounded." They represented the more downtrodden element who now had a chance, while left to themselves, to secure much of the land that had belonged originally to their fathers and whose former overlords were now far off in Babylonia. Neighboring tribes on the east saw their opportunity also and pressed in, marrying into Hebrew families to get title to land. Colonists that the Assyrians had planted in the Northern Kingdom when the ten tribes were taken away also married among the Hebrews, and there was a general intermingling of blood and of ideals. Thus the fertile land had all been taken up by the poor remnant left behind in 586 B.C. or by the neighboring tribes who moved in and intermarried to their advantage with the Jews that were there. When the scions of the best families of Jerusalem appeared again, having been allowed to return from their captivity, they looked down upon these inferior people as they considered them. They viewed them much as Americans of English stock have looked askance at those of their number who married among the Indians. With the same contempt these Jews looked down upon

the people they called "Samaritans," "half-breeds" as we would call them. Thus originated the bitter feeling between the Jews of Jerusalem and the Samaritans, which lasted to the very end.

**Schism between Jews and Samaritans.** This superior air caused much trouble. At first the Samaritans wished to help build up Jerusalem, but upon receiving unmistakable rebuffs they turned about and plagued the Jews as much as possible, putting serious obstacles in the way of their securing necessary timber and materials for building. Moreover, they had the advantage, for they were in possession of all the best land. All that the Jews could manage to get hold of was a little territory about twenty-five miles square around the site of Jerusalem, very rocky and unpromising soil upon which to depend for a livelihood. They had a very hard time to get enough to keep themselves alive in that limited and comparatively barren section of land. Moreover, these men born in Babylonia found it hard to know just how to cope with drought and crop failures. It was all they could do at first to keep body and soul together, and they soon lost their enthusiasm for rebuilding the temple and the city as they had planned to do. They became so concerned with providing for the bare necessities of life that they soon lost sight of their brilliant hopes of making Jerusalem once more a city of which to be proud.

These hardships and discouragements soon had their effect upon their whole attitude toward the community. They became selfish and many of them improvident. The prophet Haggai scores some of them for looking out that they have ceiled houses in which to live but utterly neglecting the temple, the centre of community good, and others for running down at the heels, for earning "wages to put it into a bag with holes." [1]

**Importance of Darius.** They had been back about sixteen years and the temple was left with only a few foundation stones when the prophet Haggai, aided by Zechariah, stirred them up to begin again upon its rebuilding. In four years it was finished and rededicated. Haggai took advantage of political disturb-

[1] Hag. 1 : 4–6.

ances at the Persian capital in his appeal to the people to set to work and finish the temple. The successors of Cyrus had not been so strong and wise as he, and now Darius, not a real heir to the throne, though claiming to be of the royal house, was elected king by a band of conspirators. It was some time before Darius absolutely established his sovereignty, and this was the occasion of the revolt of many provinces. The little Hebrew colony was in no position to do this, even had they so wished, and yet Haggai and Zechariah saw in this "shaking of nations" the promise of a time to come when it would be most desirable to have a capital city of some consequence and a temple which would be a rallying-centre for all Jews, nay, even for other nations. Darius was open to appeal on the ground of justice when the Jews declared that by the decree of Cyrus they had permission to rebuild the temple. He made a search for the records, found it was so, and ordered his governor to remove all obstacles in the way. Thus Haggai had a clear field for his plea to the people to get to work and rebuild the temple, and they followed his lead.

**Beginning of Persia's Decline.** The beginning of the end of the Persian Empire now appears when Darius started a series of aggressive campaigns westward, encountering the Scythians and the Greeks. It is now that we hear of the famous battle of Marathon and the bravery of the Athenians in defending their country against Persian encroachments. After Darius's death his son Xerxes continued the plan his father had begun of subjugating Greece. His renown as a general has been perpetuated in Xenophon's history of this period. His organizing ability and determination to conquer was quite wonderful. But even with his army, which was a very large one for those days, and with the fleet he had created, he met overwhelming defeat at the battles of Salamis and Platæa. From this time the odds were against Persia, and, while her empire continued for another century and more, she gradually declined in power until Alexander the Great was able completely to strip her of her glory. The change in international affairs from the dominance of Persia to that of Greece meant very much in every way to the life of the people of Palestine.

**Nehemiah's Greatness.** But in the meantime some favorable things happened for the Hebrews. Artaxerxes, the successor of Xerxes, had in his service at court a Jew by the name of Nehemiah. He was "cup-bearer to the king," a very important position. While holding such an influential place in the royal circles, he nevertheless was a very loyal Jew. When told by an embassy from Jerusalem of the discouraged state in which his kinsmen who returned were finding themselves, he very tactfully set to work to secure help from the king. He was a court favorite, and, while Artaxerxes made him promise to return, he was appointed governor of the little colony at Jerusalem, and was armed with letters to other satraps of the region ordering them to put no obstacles in his way and to assist him with supplies of lumber. Upon his arrival at Jerusalem he showed great executive ability in organizing the Jews and setting them in groups to build up the walls of the city. He showed also great nobility of character as well as diplomacy in avoiding the traps laid for him by jealous officials and ungrateful brethren. After he had accomplished this work he went back to the Persian capital, but later revisited Jerusalem, stirring up the people to adopt much-needed reforms in their social organization. Nehemiah is one of the greatest characters of the Old Testament. By his courage and hopefulness, his ability to accomplish practical things, and by the wholesomeness of his high ideals for society he was able to put a new spirit into the little Jewish colony. He left them with a renewed belief in their high mission and new heart to continue the work.

**Ezra's Influence.** Another very important man of this period was Ezra, the scribe. He belonged to a priestly family and had centred his attention while in exile upon the laws of the Hebrews. He was firmly convinced that the future of his race depended upon the keeping of their own law. He made an expedition to Jerusalem with a band of followers ninety or more years after the first pilgrims had returned. Possibly his first visit was before that of Nehemiah. But he did not accomplish much until Nehemiah came and backed him up. Then, when the colonists saw there was something practical to work

for, Ezra came forward with his teachings concerning the importance of the law. A great assembly was called before which Ezra read the law and explained it to the people.

The language now spoken was Aramaic. The Arameans were a Semitic race living in the region of the Euphrates and constituted a large body of the common people of Babylonia and neighboring countries. The Hebrews gradually picked up their dialect until it became the speech of Palestine. After the Exile only the priests and rabbis used pure Hebrew. It was their classic language in which their Scriptures were written, but it needed interpretation among the uneducated. So Ezra read the law in Hebrew while others acted as interpreters. Ezra felt very sure that intermarriages with foreigners must be stopped in order to keep the Jewish blood and religion pure from the contaminating influence of heathen peoples. He even went so far as to institute a drastic law commanding men already married to foreign wives to divorce them. There was a revolt at this, some of the prominent families removing into Samaria, where they set up a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. A reference to this rival worship is made in New Testament times, when the Samaritan woman said to Jesus: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The charming story which we have in the book of Ruth is supposed to have been written at this time in defense of foreign marriages. If David, the greatest king the Hebrews ever had, sprang from a foreign marriage, why should there be such severity now with regard to such unions? This was the argument.

**The Priestly Code.** The work of Ezra as well as that of Nehemiah was much needed in order to hold the people together and make them feel they had something distinctive to stand for. But this insistence upon the law was afterward carried to a great extreme, so that the Jewish religion lost much of its spirituality and became a legal and ceremonial affair. More laws were added than were found in the Deuteronomic Code. These additional laws are known as the Priestly Code because the priests wrote them. They deal very largely with

ceremonial requirements rather than with ethical principles and for this reason are not of as high an order as the earlier laws. Because of this emphasis upon outward forms rather than the spirit within, religion became a mechanical affair. Hebrew literature also deteriorated. There seemed to be no such springs of spontaneous thought and expression as had inspired the great prophets. Occasional prophets did appear, but none who ranked with Amos, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. Life was institutionalized. The priests and the temple were the centre of everything. Before long men appeared whose work it was to interpret the meaning of the law, or Torah, and who left such a body of explanations that the explanations became more important than the law itself. Thus the Talmud arose.

**Influences Leading to the Formation of Parties.** All of this, of course, took time, but as we look back upon the progress of these years we see two results which issued from this emphasis upon the law. First, in the course of time there came to be two parties, one strict and puritanical in requirements, the other liberal and even worldly in their habits. Before the beginning of the Christian era we find these two parties, called the Pharisees and the Sadducees respectively. One of the grounds upon which they split was the additions made to what was regarded as the Mosaic Law, or the Pentateuch. The Sadducees would not recognize the mass of obligations which the Pharisees assumed were necessary in order to be good Jews. A second result was that these parties grew very important in political relations with outside powers and in the hold they had upon the masses of the people. In later years the Sadducees were considered the aristocratic worldly party who catered to the foreign power in control, whereas the Pharisees were the popular party among the people at home, preserving Judaism from extinction. We are now beginning to get the background for New Testament times, but before we go on to that period let us note the social and ethical ideals that emerged from this peculiarly chaotic stage of Hebrew life.

# CHAPTER XXV

## THE SOCIAL AND ETHICAL IDEALS OF THIS PERIOD

**Low Morals.** We have observed that Haggai took the people to task for their shiftlessness and disregard of community good. Their discouragement and general hopelessness after the return from Babylon had a very definite effect upon their morals. Haggai's contemporary, the prophet Zechariah, reveals a tendency to low moral standards, for he has to charge them to "speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor—and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath."[1] And still another writer of this period shows us how their discouragement and hard experiences resulted in a general scepticism concerning the reality of religion. They cried out, "Where is the God of Justice?" and became very indifferent and neglectful of their tithes for the temple service and of all religious obligations. They thought the evil-doer got along quite as well as the man who tried to do right and therefore sorcery and adultery and oppression were rampant.[2] But after Ezra came upon the scene, with his emphasis upon keeping the law, there were more regulations concerning property rights and social crimes as well as ceremonial observances.

**The City the Centre of Attraction.** It must be borne in mind that the captivity was the deportation of city people for the most part. Jerusalem then stood for the entire nation in the eyes of foreigners; to take Jerusalem meant to take the whole country. During the captivity the Hebrews were renamed Jews, for they were the inhabitants of Judea and of

[1] Zech. 8 : 16, 17. [2] Mal. 2 and 3.

Jerusalem in particular. The prophets of the Exile sang of the glory of the new Jerusalem to be:

> O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,
> Lift up thy voice with strength.[1]
>
> Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;
> Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem.
>
> Shake thyself from the dust;
> Arise, sit on thy throne, O Jerusalem![2]

Ezekiel, the man of visions, states that "in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten" Yahweh gave him an inspiration. "In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me down upon a very high mountain, whereon was as it were the frame of a city on the south." And then he goes into a very elaborate and detailed description of this rebuilt city. It is to be new in spirit as well as form. There are to be princes, but they "shall no more oppress my people but they shall give the land to the house of Israel according to their tribes."[3] And when a little band of them came back it was to the old site of the city of Jerusalem that they directed their steps with the express purpose of rebuilding the city. It was not at all the same idea that the Israelites had when they escaped from Egypt and approached the "Promised Land." Then their eyes were upon "a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey."[4] Now they were to sing of

> The city of our God,
> In his holy mountain,
> Beautiful in elevation,
> The joy of the whole earth.[5]

Many of them did live in the country in order to get a living, but city life from now on to Roman times is the centre of attraction.

[1] Isaiah 40 : 9. [2] Isaiah 52 : 1, 2. [3] Ezek. 40 and 45.
[4] Ex. 3 : 8. [5] Psalms 48 : 1, 2.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her;
Number the towers thereof;
Mark ye well her bulwarks;
Consider her palaces;
That ye may tell it to the generation following.[1]

**Jerusalem the Centre of Religious and Intellectual Aristocracy.** It was a long time before they had real palaces, yet this was their ideal, and Jerusalem was once more to be the centre of an aristocracy. It was now especially a religious aristocracy; these returned Jews of the old Jerusalem families had come back chiefly because of religious fervor, with the conviction that it was their mission to re-establish the proper worship of Yahweh upon the Temple Hill. It was they who held the key to God's promises for their race, they firmly believed, and they were not in the least cordial to any other interpretation. This attitude became so stamped upon the future generations that even in New Testament times a Jew from Jerusalem held himself quite superior to citizens of other parts of the country. When Jesus sat with the Samaritan woman on the well-curb she accused him as a rabbi from the Holy City of holding that "in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." When Philip found the blue-blooded Israelite Nathaniel and told him about Jesus, his scornful reply was: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The leaders of the people laid great emphasis upon keeping the law and observing the ceremonies of their own religion. Because of this the scribes, who were later called rabbis, and the priestly class became exceedingly important. Jerusalem became the centre of rabbinical learning, and in later days it was the Mecca for all young aspirants to the rabbinical fold. Here they could sit at the feet of such teachers as Hillel, Shammai, and Gamaliel. Jerusalem therefore became the centre of an intellectual aristocracy.

**Class Distinctions Again.** It was not so very many years after the return from Babylon before many of the Jews recovered from discouragement. Some of the later pilgrims evi-

[1] Psalms 48 : 12, 13. Probably written in the late Persian period.

dently brought wealth with them. Nehemiah was such a man, using his means generously for the community welfare. But the old temptation to use the power of wealth to their own advantage asserted itself again. Nehemiah rebukes these well-to-do citizens roundly for being so mean to their poorer brethren as to charge them interest when they had to borrow money to pay their taxes. The common people were evidently hard pressed sometimes to meet the tribute the Persians laid upon them, but their lot was made all the harder because they felt that their well-to-do kinsmen were taking advantage of their necessity. Poverty and comfort were apparently residing side by side, in some degree as it had been before the Exile, and the greediness of the landowner was still manifest. "Then there arose a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons and our daughters, are many; let us get corn that we may eat and live. Some also there were that said, We are mortgaging our fields, and our vineyards, and our houses; let us get corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute upon our fields and our vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already; neither is it in our power to help it; for other men have our fields and our vineyards." [1]

Thus Jerusalem by degrees again became the proud centre of the whole land, religiously, intellectually, and from the standpoint of concentrated wealth and power. It has been pointed out by certain scholars[2] that the prophetic picture of the great Deliverer to come, the Messiah, varies according to whether it represented the desire of the upper or lower classes. The upper classes were looking for wealth and power, the lower classes for justice. A prophecy representing the first may be found in Isaiah 61 : 4, 6: "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the

[1] Neh. 5 : 1–5.

[2] See Wallis, *Sociological Study of the Bible.*

waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." One representing the second is found in Isaiah 42 : 1–4: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set justice in the land."

**Spiritual Ideals.** But notwithstanding the unattractive picture of society during the period of reconstruction following their captivity, there are some noble and inspiring thoughts that were taking possession of the finest minds. Jerusalem, the city of Zion, was to be rebuilt and readorned, not simply for the sake of the Jews alone, but the light that was to shine from that city set upon a hill was to be seen all over the world and become a beacon light to draw all nations to the true God.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of Yahweh has arisen upon thee.
For behold darkness doth cover the earth,
And a black cloud the peoples;

But upon thee Yahweh doth rise,
And His glory upon thee appears;
And nations proceed to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.

. . . . . .

They, too, shall approach bending low—
The sons of these who did humble and spurn thee;
And they shall call thee, city of Yahweh,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.[1]

[1] Isaiah 60 : 1–3, 14. Translation of G. H. Box.

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Yahweh of hosts; . . . for I am a great King, saith Yahweh of hosts, and my name is terrible among the Gentiles." [1]

A part of this remarkable faith in the ultimate triumph of Zion was undoubtedly due to national pride and the desire to see those who had been the cause of their humiliation themselves humiliated at their feet. It would have been a most unnatural thing had it not been so. But down underneath all that was the germ of a much larger thought. "Have we not all one father? Hath not God created us?" [2] This was first applied to their own social relationships to one another, but it soon worked its way out beyond national confines, and by the time the author of the book of Jonah appeared on the scene some of the people at least had grasped the idea clearly that they had a mission to the whole world and that the God who loved them loved their enemies also, even those who had oppressed and persecuted them. It was a great thing for a few leaders to catch the inspiration of that thought even though it had not yet reached the masses of the people.

**A New Philosophy of Life.** Another great step in the thinking of the day was made when the author of the book of Job broke away from the old philosophy of life to which the Hebrews tenaciously clung, along with other races, the philosophy that accounted for troubles of all sorts by saying that they were sent as punishments by God. Many troubles can indeed be traced directly to man's sin, but there are thousands of people who are caught in the meshes of calamities and distress who so far as their own conscious efforts are concerned have tried to live upright and holy lives. In ancient days man had conceived the thought that by the law of cause and effect the individual must suffer for racial sins. "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." But they had not worked through that mysterious law to any good for the individual that was to come out of such

[1] Mal. 1 : 11, 14. [2] Mal. 2 : 10.

suffering. And in Job's day it was the popular method to trace cause and effect very quickly from a calamity to the punishment of some immediate sin committed by the individual. Even to-day the law of life that any person may suffer for the sins of the race seems unjust and inexplicable to many afflicted souls. But the great advance in thinking that Job made was in the fact that he would not acknowledge that his troubles had come upon him because he himself had consciously done wrong. He knew that he had endeavored to live a just and upright life, and he saw many openly wicked people flourishing in worldly prosperity while he was humiliated and distressed. There must be some other explanation for trouble than one's personal guilt, Job argued, and while he offered no solution to the age-long puzzle of sin and pain, he did find a much higher basis for trust in God. Out of his calamities and distresses he learned that there is a faith in God resting upon spiritual communion with him which far surpasses the pleasure and comfort of material blessings, that these may come or go without injuring the man if he knows his God on the spiritual plane. Perhaps the truth did not find expression in the beautiful poem we have in the book of Job until the early part of the Greek period, but the stage of gestation for the birth of so great an idea was the experience of the Exile and the discouragements of the postexilic period.

This is one of the great transforming thoughts of the world. It was one the Hebrews sadly needed in order to make their troubles endurable and to keep them from a narrow and bitter selfishness in their struggle for life. The great weight of testimony seems to show that up to this time they looked upon the blessing of God as material blessing. God's promises were to them promises made of land and flocks and children and long life; in a word, of earthly prosperity. And their allegiance to Yahweh was a sort of contract: We serve God and God blesses us. To be sure, the social message of the prophets struck a very high note, the note of justice and brotherly love, because justice and brotherly love are eternally right. Moreover, to their minds God was to be loved because of his inherently

righteous character rather than because of his gifts; but the ideal kingdom that even they were looking forward to was a paradise on earth.

**The Progress in Job's Thinking.** The progress in Job's thinking was this: Supposing Utopias never arrive or our earthly air-castles are rudely shattered, is life then not worth living? Job's wife advised him to curse God and die, but Job himself laid hold of the greater truth that spiritual living makes life worth while regardless of the transiency of material surroundings. The story of Abraham and Isaac clearly portrays the dawning on the mind of man in primitive times of the conception that the true God does not wish the bloody death of a victim in order to show reverence to higher powers, but rather that God requires a consecrated life; the story of Job reveals clearly the fact that man had now conceived the distinction between consecration to earthly prosperity and a consecration to a life upon a spiritual plane. The struggle between these two ideas was henceforth to have a very marked effect upon Hebrew history, socially, politically, religiously.

# CHAPTER XXVI

## THE GREEK AND MACCABEAN PERIODS

**Alexander the Great.** Several kings were on the Persian throne after the day of Nehemiah and Artaxerxes I. At last Darius III appeared. In the meantime Persia had steadily grown weaker and Greece stronger. The famous general, Alexander the Great, came upon the horizon to sweep everything before him even so far as India. At the battle of Issus, in 333 B.C., he defeated the army of Darius III and made a path for himself down the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea to Egypt. There he founded the great city which has ever since been called by his name, Alexandria. In passing through Syria and Palestine he had to stop some time before Tyre and Gaza, two independent cities that resisted fiercely his encroachments. There is also a traditional account of a visit to Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah refers to the siege of Tyre and of Gaza. Upon his return from Egypt he pushed farther east, and at the battle of Arbela, in 331 B.C., finally defeated Darius. But wherever Alexander went he carried with him his new policy of bringing his subjects the best Greece had to offer, not simply her military jurisdiction. The Greek language, Greek learning, Greek pleasures—in a word, all that Greek culture stood for—followed in his train. This Hellenization of all Greek possessions was Alexander's cherished plan and it brought with it consequences of tremendous import. This is why our New Testament is written in Greek rather than Hebrew or Aramaic. This is why the Sadducees became strong devotees of Greek customs and why Greek philosophy crept into later Christian thinking.

**Economic and Social Conditions.** During the Greek period we know very little in detail concerning the economic and social

conditions in Palestine because there were not so many nor so great prophets to leave their writings to us. But we do know in general that with the introduction of Greek rule and Greek culture fashions greatly changed. The standards of society were no longer Jewish but Greek. He who spoke the Greek language, exercised in the Greek gymnasiums, enjoyed the Greek theatres, dressed as the Greeks dressed, and even adopted a Greek name, was the stylish person. The establishment of Greek cities and Greek colonies in their very midst could hardly help having such an effect. The party of the Sadducees that now began to grow rapidly openly advocated catering to the Greeks in their life as well as their politics. But of course such doctrine brought out an opposition party just as pronounced and clear-cut in their teachings, especially when religious practices were assailed. The Pharisees were the Puritans of the age, leaders of the strictly Jewish branch of the race. It is evident that they succeeded in holding the masses of the people and in educating them to a closer observance of the law than was felt obligatory in Nehemiah's time. In Nehemiah's day people had to be enjoined again and again to keep the Sabbath, but in 321 B.C., when Ptolemy I took Jerusalem, it was because the Jews as a nation refused to fight upon their holy Sabbath day. It took some years, however, to bring about this change of feeling.

In order to account for the attitude of mind that we find prevalent among the Jews of New Testament times, which was quite different from that of the Persian period, we need to look briefly at the forces that were pressing in upon them from without, the rapid changes that were occurring in the outside world, and especially the rise of two influential cities that were to dominate the life and thought of all that region.

**Seleucids and Ptolemies.** When Alexander died, in 323 B.C., his kingdom was divided at first into four sections but was soon consolidated into three—Greece and Asia Minor, Syria and the East, and Egypt. The family that ruled Syria was called the Seleucidæ, or Seleucids, from their first ruler, Seleucus I. His successors were sometimes called by the name of Seleucus

and sometimes by the name Antiochus, for Antiochus was the father of Seleucus I and a great general in Alexander's army. The capital city, Antioch of Syria, was named after him. The family that took possession of Egypt were called the Ptolemies, and Alexandria was the capital.

**Importance of Alexandria and Antioch.** These two cities, Alexandria and Antioch, now became the most influential of the Eastern world and kept that position for some time. They were the centres of political life, of fashions, of learning, of culture. In the course of time they attracted the Greek and Roman literati. Alexandria became one of the university centres, with Athens and Tarsus only as its rivals. Antioch, with its beautiful situation on the Orontes River, was the pleasure resort of the luxury-loving elite of the empire, noted for its brilliancy and wit.

These two cities also were centres to which the Jews escaped during their many persecutions. Life here was very attractive to them as well as to other races. The merchant class found here great opportunities, and the intellectual stimulus of Alexandria developed the best Jewish literature of the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. In Roman times also the Jews were more liberally treated here than in most cities of the empire; they were granted the privileges of full citizenship and had a voice in the matter of government. As a consequence of all this, we find that in the first centuries of the Christian era these two cities figured with Jerusalem in the impetus they gave to Christianity. Jerusalem may be called the mother of the Christian church, Alexandria the mother of the Christian creeds, and Antioch the mother of Christian missions. But we have just now to consider the early days of their importance as the capitals of the Ptolemies and Seleucids.

These two families were almost always at sword's points, and since Palestine lay directly between them it became a bone of contention, a choice morsel to fight over, for generations. At first it was a province of the Ptolemies and the Jews were treated comparatively well. Indeed, one of the kings took so much interest in his Jewish subjects that he gathered together

seventy of their best scholars and had them make a translation of their Hebrew Scriptures, which no one but the learned class could read, into the Greek language, which had become the universal tongue of the day. This version of the Old Testament is called the Septuagint, after the seventy translators. This was in the third century B.C. At the close of this century Antiochus the Great, who was the ablest of all the Seleucid dynasty, set himself against the Ptolemies and tried for twenty years to get possession of Palestine. This he succeeded in doing in 198 B.C.

**Schism between Pharisees and Sadducees.** The Seleucids were by no means such considerate masters as the Ptolemies had been, and now began some of the severest troubles the Jews ever passed through. The autocratic policy that was assumed by the kings was quite unendurable to the independent Jews. This was the time when the schism between the Sadducees and the Pharisees became so pronounced that they appear as two rival political parties. The Sadducees advocated catering to courtly favor and getting as much out of the situation for themselves as possible. The Pharisees believed in standing by Jewish principles and fighting for their religion and their independence. The Sadducees, therefore, were easily bribed and gained public position and much wealth by playing into the hands of the ruling class. The Pharisees became more and more the Puritan party, scorning to sell their principles for a mess of pottage.

**Tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes.** When Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne in 176 B.C. he was found to be more overbearing than any of his predecessors. As a young man he probably gained the crown by putting his brother out of the way. As he grew older his selfishness and cruelty caused him to become one of the most tyrannical rulers of history. He was inordinately ambitious. Rome was now beginning to assert herself and to become a foe to be feared. Her aggressions were reaching out toward the eastern limits of the Mediterranean and Antiochus conceived the idea of federating all the Hellenic powers to resist her. He tried to get hold of Egypt for this

purpose, and in his expeditions thither travelled many times back and forth through Palestine. His policy was to Hellenize this province completely. To this end he enacted decrees forbidding the observance of Jewish laws, such as the keeping of the Sabbath, and requiring their Scriptures to be destroyed and the introduction of Greek observances in the place of their ordinary usages.

On one of his journeys he visited Jerusalem, showing no regard whatever for Jewish customs or beliefs. He even desecrated the temple, requiring swine's flesh to be sacrificed on the altar and that Zeus should be worshipped in place of Yahweh. This, of course, was the supreme offense in the eyes of the loyal Jews, and when his soldiers commanded the priest of the village Modein, Mattathias by name, to set the example for all the people in such sacrilegious worship he flatly refused. There followed a wrangle over the matter, and in the midst of the dispute the Syrian captain was slain. This was the signal for a general revolt of the loyal party. The people gathered together under the leadership of the five sons of Mattathias, and thus began what is known as the Maccabean war in 167 B.C.

**The Maccabean Period.** Judas was the strongest general of the five sons of Mattathias, and therefore the leadership fell to him until his death in battle in 161 B.C. It was he who gained for the whole family the title Maccabeus, which means "the hammerer," so persistent were his blows against the enemy. Another name for this family is the Hasmoneans, from their ancestor Hasmon. Judas Maccabeus called together all the people who had refused apostasy and had been hiding away from the Syrian soldiers in secret or out-of-the-way places. He conducted such successful guerilla warfare against the trained Syrian army, far outnumbering his own, that in the course of three years he had regained the temple, cleansed it of its idolatry, and had it rededicated in the name of Yahweh. Thus originated the annual Jewish celebration known as the Feast of Dedication. After this he pushed on in his general cleaning out of the enemies on all sides until the Jews almost thought they had David's kingdom back again.

**A Few Years of Independence.** In the meantime Antiochus Epiphanes had died a miserable death and his heirs took up the fight against Judas. The Sadducean party, the Hellenizing class, played into their hands, and finally Judas was killed. His brother Jonathan then assumed authority for some years. During this time there were troubles at the Syrian capital among the rivals for the throne. In order to keep the Maccabees as quiet as possible much liberty was allowed them. Jonathan was made high priest and governor, although he was still a vassal to Syria. There was, however, among the Syrians much jealousy of Jonathan's increasing importance, and he was treacherously put to death in 143 B.C. Then Simon, the eldest brother, took the lead. He had been very modest and quiet up to this time, but proved to be wise and strong, and for eight years brought greater peace and prosperity to Palestine than had been known for a long time. He was bold enough to rid Jerusalem of the Syrian garrison, and when called to account for it defeated the Syrian army so effectively that for a brief period the independence of the Jewish nation was established. It lasted for eighty years. Simon was made ruler and high priest by the people, although he avoided the title of king. The coins of this period prove the independence of the Jews, for they bear their own national stamp rather than that of a sovereign country. He turned his attention to internal improvements. In their own name the Jews handled their own commerce, for Joppa was secured for a seaport. They paid for goods in their own coin. Simon's praises are sung highly by the author of I Maccabees, for

> He brought peace in the land
> And Israel rejoiced greatly;
> Each man sat under his own vine and fig-tree,
> And no one made them afraid.
> There was no one on earth who made war upon them,
> And the kings were humbled in those days.
> He lifted up the poor of his people;
> He was full of zeal for the Law
> And cut off every renegade and sinner.

He beautified the Sanctuary
And multiplied the vessels of the Temple.[1]

Simon was very insistent also upon keeping the Jewish law. But he, too, fell a victim to envy, this time within his own family. A son-in-law murdered Simon and two of his sons at a banquet, hoping thereby to set himself up as king.

**Seeds of Future Trouble.** But the plans went astray, and John Hyrcanus, a third son of Simon, took his father's place, assuming also the title of king. For thirty years this aggressive ruler overcame the enemies on all sides and extended the limits of the kingdom in all directions, although he sowed the seeds of future bitterness by his drastic treatment of the Samaritans on the north and the Edomites or Idumeans on the south. The former considered themselves insulted by the destruction of their temple on Mount Gerizim. The latter people were forcibly converted to Judaism, but afterward paid back in similar coin all ill treatment of themselves, becoming masters of the Jewish situation and putting their own family of Herods on the throne. John Hyrcanus kept the high priesthood as well as the kingship in his own hands, although objection to this incongruous state of affairs became outspoken before he died. At his death (105 B.C.) he tried to solve the difficulty by making his son, Aristobulus I, high priest and leaving the throne to his wife. But this did not suit the son, who imprisoned his mother and seized the throne.

From this time on to the conquest of Palestine by the Romans, in 63 B.C., there was a succession of family quarrels in the Hasmonean house. There was constant rivalry between the high priest and king and a widening of the breach between the Sadducean and the Pharisaic parties. If one ruler favored the Sadducees the next one would appeal to the Pharisees. There were constant massacres and internal broils and a consequent increase of class hatred and a weakening of the strength of the nation.

**Alexandra's Golden Age.** Alexander Jannæus, a brother of the usurper, succeeded him and was so despotic and irreligious

[1] I Mac. 14 : 11–15.

that he aroused the bitter hatred of the loyal Jews. Although he extended the territory of the kingdom, his policy was so selfish and harsh that his reign was an unfortunate one for the Jewish people. When he died his wife, Alexandra, became queen, one of the two ruling queens of Hebrew history. Her reign was quite in contrast to that of the wicked Athaliah. In direct opposition to her husband's administration she favored the religious class and put the power into the hands of the Pharisees. She did many things for the improvement and uplift of the people; one of them was the establishment of primary schools. Her reign was called a "Golden Age."

**The Synagogue.** By this time the synagogue in Palestine became an important institution. In every Jewish settlement of any size this community house was built, for wherever ten male persons were present service could be held. It was the centre of worship and instruction and the court of justice. Here the law was read to all the people and rabbis taught it to the children, and if on a Sabbath day no rabbis were at hand, some one in the audience was asked to take the roll of Scripture and read it to the congregation. Thus Jesus later had the natural opportunity to announce his mission to his own home town as he read the roll of the prophet Isaiah. Up to the time of the founding of primary schools the father and mother were the teachers of the children. This perhaps accounts for the fact that "there were no homes like those in Israel." But it was a step in advance when a systematic provision was made for such instruction within the community. It is probable that Jesus became so very familiar with the Old Testament, especially the Prophets, the Psalms, and the book of Deuteronomy, not only by learning it at his mother's knee but under the guidance of some rabbi of Nazareth. When in Roman days the Jews wished to commend a Roman centurion for his generosity and care for the public weal, they praised him for building them one of these community houses, a synagogue.

**Economic and Social Changes.** It is estimated that at the close of the Persian period there were about two hundred and fifty thousand people in Judea. They had gradually gained a little more territory than when they first came back from cap-

tivity. As new conditions arose Jews were to be found all over Palestine in the more fertile regions of Samaria and Galilee, as well as near Jerusalem, although Judea was still the stronghold of Judaism. A still greater change had come over the spirit of the people. Life in other parts of the Greek Empire was made so attractive that a Jew no longer looked upon residence away from the homeland as a hardship but rather as a privilege. In Alexandria and Antioch and probably in Tarsus he could have free citizenship. In many places in Asia Minor he could find opportunities for lucrative employment, and not only so, but often he found positions of rank open to him. Thus thrown out into the world, not as captives but as voluntary residents seeking their fortunes, they gained a cosmopolitan experience which made them worldly wise. In one of the books of this period the wise man says:

> He that hath no experience knoweth few things,
> But he that hath wandered shall increase skill.[1]

**Influence of the Diaspora.** And yet, notwithstanding the attractiveness and excitement of life in foreign parts, the loyalty of the Jews to their homeland, especially to the capital city of Jerusalem and the temple, is a striking characteristic. Their custom was to have a place of worship, a synagogue, in every city where there were Jews enough to gather together, to instruct their children in the Hebrew law, and to send back their promising youth to Jerusalem to be educated as rabbis. They each paid a temple tax and knew they were being prayed for in Jerusalem as they turned their faces in that direction to offer their own prayers. In such manifestations of loyalty they held together even though scattered over the earth. Thus the Jewish Diaspora, or that part of the Jewish race scattered in other countries than Palestine, became a powerful factor in Greek days and continued its centres of influence all over the world into the Roman period. Two natural results followed. Some of the foreigners were won over to their faith and, on the other

[1] Ecclesiasticus 34 : 10.

hand, some of their own number became cosmopolitan in their sympathies.

**Pompey and the Romans.** It is necessary now for us to glance for a moment at the way Palestine fell into the hands of the Romans. When Queen Alexandra died her two sons were found to be weak and inefficient. One of them, Hyrcanus II, was already high priest; the other, Aristobulus II, wanted to be made king. Now was the opportune time for the crafty Idumean family to step in with counsel. Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, who was governor of Idumea at this time, assumed friendship for the weak Hyrcanus and advised him to ask the help of an Arabian prince, Aretas, in getting the throne away from his brother. Just at this juncture Pompey was making an expedition eastward with his Roman army. The eyes of the Jews had before this been turned toward Rome as a possible helper in time of difficulty. Now both brothers appealed to Pompey. The Pharisees also sent a delegation to him asking that he should set them free from both their would-be rulers and restore to them the liberty of their original government. Pompey therefore appeared in Jerusalem, overcame all resistance by a three months' siege of the citadel, took Aristobulus with him to Rome to adorn his triumphal procession, and left Hyrcanus as high priest. Over the whole of Syria he appointed a Roman governor. Thus begins the Roman period of supremacy.

# CHAPTER XXVII

## THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE TIMES

**Literary Product of This Period.** During the Greek and Maccabean periods a certain amount of literature was produced although for the most part not of as high a grade as that of the great prophets. The priests and scribes were very much concerned with the law and its interpretation. There was another class of writers called the sages who produced a certain type of writing known as the Wisdom Literature. This includes such books as the final collection of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. These wise men were teachers and assumed the didactic style. Some of the Psalms were also written now for use in the elaborate ritual service that was being developed. One of the most interesting productions of this period is the book of Daniel. Some heroic, loyal Jew of the early Maccabean days saw the necessity of exhorting his brethren to keep faithful to their own religion. He took an old Babylonian hero story as his text and added to it a description of his own times under Antiochus Epiphanes. It was written about 166 B.C. and was the last book to be added to our Old Testament. There were other books written, however, which did not succeed in getting into our Bible, such as I and II Maccabees, which give accounts of that stirring time, and various examples of Wisdom Literature included in what is called the Apocrypha. This literature reveals what is known of the point of view of the times.

**Broader Education.** The Jews of the Greek and Maccabean periods became more widely educated than simply to know the Jewish law. Natural lovers of music, they gained much from the Greek development of this art. The author of Ecclesiasticus says:

Hinder not music;
Pour not out talk when there is a performance of music.

Their buildings reflect a knowledge of Greek architecture. The healing art embodied in a physician freed from the bondage of religious superstition was now respected.

> The skill of the physician shall lift up his head
> And in the sight of great men shall he be admired.
> The Lord created medicines out of the earth,
> And the prudent man will have no disgust at them.[1]

The old idea that all sickness is a direct punishment of God for some wilful error and therefore necessitating religious rites for healing was giving place to a more rational conception, although, indeed, we find that old idea persisting even into New Testament days when the horrible death of King Agrippa was ascribed to blasphemy.[2]

**A Picture of Social Conditions.** There is one book of this period which seems to sum up in a measure the economic and social conditions and at the same time to reveal the philosophy of life held by this worldly-wise age. The title is Koheleth, or, in our English form, Ecclesiastes. The word simply means preacher or debater, and in the course of the author's debates on life and its worth he gives us a picture of society. There seems to be plenty of means for supplying pleasure; indeed, pleasure had evidently become an end in itself for many people. Whatever would "cheer the flesh" and bring mirth and laughter, whether it was wine and revelry, music and banquets, or the enjoyments of the countryside, are all present in abundance for those who are able to avail themselves of such delights. The man of means indulges his tastes in possessing houses and vineyards, gardens and parks, and country estates beautifully laid out, with many flocks and herds grazing over his grassy slopes. Such men have many servants of all sorts, not simply to perform the drudgery, but even artists, such as musicians

[1] Ecclesiasticus 38 ; 1-15. [2] Acts 12 ; 20-23.

and singers. Yet with it all there seems to be great uncertainty of fortune. All these delights may be his one day and gone the next. He may be considered a rich man and yet his son will have nothing.

There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt; and those riches perish by evil adventure; and if he hath begotten a son, there is nothing in his hand.[1]

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy upon men; a man to whom God giveth riches, wealth, and honor, so that he lacketh nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but an alien eateth it; this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.[2]

I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking like servants upon the earth.[3]

And with this uncertainty of possessions and topsy-turvy character of society, there was evidently great oppression of the poor by those who had the power.

Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead that have been long dead more than the living that are yet alive; yea, better than they both is he that hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.[4]

Moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of justice, that wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, that wickedness was there.[5]

This is somewhat the same picture that the prophets present before the captivity, but the philosophy of life which they uphold as a remedy differs very markedly from that of the worldly-wise preacher. To them the hope of restoring a state of society where justice and brotherly love should be in control does not seem an impossibility at all. To Koheleth the wisest thing to

[1] Eccles. 5 : 13, 14. [2] Eccles. 6 : 1, 2. [3] Eccles. 10 : 7.
[4] Eccles. 4 : 1–3. [5] Eccles. 3 : 16.

do in order to get the most out of life is to enjoy this life as much as possible and to that end not to indulge in extremes. There is no passion for reform in his breast, but rather he takes for granted the present situation with its joys and its sorrows and the uncertainty of anything to follow the life on earth which shall make up for disappointments here. Therefore his advice is to make the most of this present life as it is but to remember that the safest road is the happy mean.

The Words of the Wise in the book of Proverbs repeat this same advice:

> Weary not thyself to be rich;
> For riches certainly make themselves wings.[1]
>
> Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
> When it sparkleth in the cup,
> When it goeth down smoothly;
> At the last it biteth like a serpent,
> And stingeth like an adder.[2]
>
> Be not thou envious against evil men;
> Neither desire to be with them.[3]
>
> Company not with them that are given to change,
> For their calamity shall rise suddenly.[4]

And here is a stoical precept from the same group of sayings:

> If thou faint in the day of adversity,
> Thy strength is small.[5]

**Type of Thinking.** But the motive behind such bravery is not faith in an ultimate right that must prevail in the end but rather a shrewd calculation of what will be the safest course on the whole in these treacherous seas. Job's thought of the reward that comes from living on a spiritual plane even in this life is far too ethereal for the worldly-wise man. And the hope

[1] Prov. 23 : 4, 5. [2] Prov. 23 : 31, 32. [3] Prov. 24 : 1.
[4] Prov. 24 : 21, 22. [5] Prov. 24 : 10.

of a reward after death, which is evidently now discussed, seems too uncertain a thing for the latter to put much stock in it in his shrewd calculations. It is very apparent that the Jew is reaping the reward of his cosmopolitan contact with the world in the type of thinking he now produces. Provincialism is passing. Will the very bigness of these world forces that are sweeping in on him uproot his faith in his peculiar mission to the world? As his horizon broadens will his eye still be fixed upon justice and brotherly love as ideal rights of every man, worth working to obtain even in this life? Or will the hopelessness of such a possibility make him content with lesser good, with such measure of happiness as he can obtain under the existing régime?

**Brief Prosperity Under Simon.** The Jew has ever been tenacious and his tenacity now proved invincible. The Maccabean struggle and the book of Daniel demonstrate without question that the inner circle of loyal Jews were willing to suffer persecution and death for the sake of faith in their mission. The brief respite from foreign control when Simon Maccabeus made Palestine once more an independent and prosperous kingdom proves the virility of this handful of people and their ideas when facing the world. But this condition of affairs did not last long, and society was in a state of turmoil with oppression from without and within during most of the years that remained of Greek supremacy. Alexandra's reign was the one bright spot left for the Jews to look back upon.

**The Apocalyptic Ideal.** During this period the hope of the faithful for the coming deliverance from the persecutions of the world were centred upon a supernatural intervention which they believed God would some day make to free them from the yoke of the oppressor and establish their social ideal, the kingdom of heaven on earth. It was their last resort, for they could now see no hope of this being brought about in a natural evolution of history. Their writers therefore ceased to be prophets, for the prophet was a social reformer urging the people through social justice to bring in their own kingdom of heaven. These apocalyptic writers, as they are called, were simply preachers

of faithful waiting for the day of the Lord. To some minds the heaven-sent Prince who was to usher in this new era was to be a man of justice and spiritual power; but to others the chief characteristic they saw was his ability to crush their enemies and make them bow at their feet.

# CHAPTER XXVIII

## THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

The economic and social conditions that surrounded Jesus made the atmosphere he breathed and created the immediate problems that were the occasion for his utterances. To understand his teachings, therefore, it is necessary to realize these conditions. When the New Testament begins the impress of Herod the Great's personality has been so marked that Palestine is really Herod's country and Jerusalem Herod's city. But who was Herod that he should have such an influence and be able to mould society as he did? He was the product of the Roman Government and the Roman attitude of mind plus his own forceful self. In order to see what he made of the Jewish kingdom we need to trace the rise of his power and the cause of the social unrest that grew apace until the black thunder-cloud finally broke in the destruction of Jerusalem.

**The Roman Period.** The first century before the Christian era is marked by the achievements of the First Roman Triumvirate, Julius Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus. The Romans had been growing in power for some time, and as Greek supremacy decayed the Romans absorbed the territory the Greeks had gained. Their ambition was to extend their empire as far as the Euphrates. The expeditions which Pompey and Crassus made to the East were very successful. They brought under Roman jurisdiction all of Asia Minor and Syria. Pompey brought Palestine under Roman sovereignty in 63 B.C. and appointed a Roman governor over all of Syria. He was much more considerate of Jewish feelings than Crassus, for Crassus plundered the temple, although they both sacrilegiously profaned it by entering the Most Holy Place. Pompey in a measure pleased the Pharisees by leaving Hyrcanus as high priest.

Religious jurisdiction was thus left in their hands; but he took away the title of king, substituting the Roman subordinate designation of "ethnarch." He also reduced their territory, so strenuously fought for by the Maccabees, to the insignificant province of Judea. The people became very restless under such indignities and especially the insolent manner assumed by Crassus, for in the partition of territory Syria had fallen to him. Revolts occurred again and again, stirred up by members of the deposed Hasmonean family. The Romans came to regard the Jews as a very difficult race to govern, naturally quarrelsome and hot-tempered, with extreme religious prejudices. This was largely due to the clash of autocratic management with Semitic independence.

**Antipater's Shrewdness.** At this point Antipater of Idumea saw his opportunity and stepped in as a middleman. He catered to Pompey, whom he convinced of his influence as adviser to Hyrcanus. When Cæsar and Pompey came to their death struggle with each other, in which Cæsar won at the battle of Pharsalia in 48 B.C., Antipater shrewdly changed his front and made himself very useful to Cæsar. Pompey fled to Egypt, where he was murdered. Cæsar hastened after him and stayed a considerable time to help Cleopatra out of her difficulties. Now was the time for Antipater to assist Cæsar very materially by sending troops. As a reward for such valiant service Cæsar made Antipater a Roman citizen, excused him from further tribute, and confirmed his position as prime minister to Hyrcanus. Cæsar also favored the Jews for their help in Antipater's army. He exempted them from the tribute Pompey had exacted; he increased the authority of Hyrcanus to cover all nations strictly Jewish in character; he made Jerusalem the capital of the provincial government, allowing them to rebuild its walls; he restored to the province some of the territory Pompey had taken away; and he assured all Jews, whether living in Palestine or elsewhere, that they should have religious liberty. Julius Cæsar thus made himself a great hero in the eyes of the Jews, visiting Palestine himself, and they sincerely mourned his death.

But Antipater did not relax his hold for a moment. When Cæsar left Palestine and Egypt and went back to Rome Antipater tightened his grip on the situation. He made most judicious requests of Cæsar at Rome, and in Palestine made the people feel that they must follow his lead or bring down on their heads the combined displeasure of himself, Hyrcanus, and Cæsar. In this way he succeeded in establishing one of his sons, Phasael, as governor of Jerusalem, and another, named Herod, as governor of Galilee. The latter was the man who became Herod the Great.

**The Young Herod.** To follow the rise of young Herod to his position of king of all Palestine is to trace the brilliant career of a talented but unscrupulous man. He is one of the few rulers of the world who has merited the title of Great because of his latent abilities. But his absolute lack of any sense of moral responsibility has marked him as one of the most cruel and unscrupulous rulers in history. He was only twenty-five years old when he was made governor of Galilee and sought at once to please Roman authorities by suppressing a robber raid among the Galileans in a very summary manner. He cleared the ground of the robbers, putting to death their chief. In so doing Herod was very rash, for in assuming to himself the authority of the death sentence over the Jews he immediately ran counter to one of the religious privileges of the Sanhedrin, or Council of the Jews. They thought this was their opportunity to assert themselves and establish the rights given them by Cæsar. Therefore they called Herod down to Jerusalem to account for his actions, with the intention of sentencing him to death. To their great astonishment he appeared in royal robes with a guard of soldiers. But they would have put through their sentence had not Hyrcanus helped him to escape by night. He fled to Damascus. There he met the Syrian governor and bribed him to make him one of his generals. With his Syrian army he would have marched straight to Jerusalem to wreak vengeance on the Sanhedrin had not the soldiers been needed first in the north to quell certain disturbances. In the meantime the news of the assassination of Cæsar reached Palestine.

Everything now was in a turmoil throughout Roman territory. Much money was needed at Rome to pay the bills of the conspirators. Accordingly a man was sent to Syria to see what he could do to raise funds. He found young Herod ready to jump at an opportunity to curry favor at Rome. The Romans levied upon the Jews a most exorbitant tax and Herod was made the agent to collect it, which he did most energetically. From this time dates the Jewish hatred for the tax-collector. As a reward Herod was made general of the entire region.

**The Second Triumvirate.** When the Second Triumvirate was established and Mark Antony appeared in the East he was met at Cleopatra's court by an embassy of Jews protesting against the Herod family and their oppressions. Herod, however, was too forehanded for them. He had already bought Antony's favor and the Jews were not even given a hearing. Four times they sent complaints, but it resulted only in repeated rebuffs and in the elevation of Herod and his brother Phasael to the position of "tetrarch" with full political power. But now the Jews started a rebellion against the whole governing force, including Hyrcanus, Herod, and Phasael. As a result of this broil Phasael committed suicide, Hyrcanus's ears were cut off so that he could no longer be high priest according to Jewish law, while Herod fled to Egypt. The latter determined to present himself at Rome before Octavius Cæsar to ask that the young grandson of Hyrcanus be appointed king. While in Egypt Cleopatra tried to induce him to stay and help her with her army, but he hurried on. Finding no vessel that would take him straight to Rome, he boarded one going as far as Rhodes, where he thought he would find another in which to continue his journey. But he was disappointed. He therefore went to work and built a ship, and while waiting for its completion cleaned up the little island, which he found in ruins. At last he arrived in Rome and presented himself before Antony and Octavius. They inquired how he came and were so much impressed by his energy and resourcefulness that they immediately appointed him as sole king over Palestine. Within a week he was on his voyage home to prove his title.

**Resistance to Herod.** It was, however, a different matter to be named king at Rome and to establish himself as king at home. It took him three years to do this, and before he got through he was using eleven legions of infantry and six thousand horse from the Roman army besides other helpers. This shows what desperate fighters the Jews were when standing up for their rights. But Herod was more than a match for them. To cement his friendship with the Hasmonean house he married Mariamne, a very beautiful woman. Herod had ten wives in his lifetime, but he is said to have been most fond of Mariamne, although he murdered her in the end in a fit of jealousy. Herod's title under Augustus Cæsar was *rex socius*, or an "allied king." This carried with it the privilege of ruling as he pleased provided he protected the frontier from foreign invasion and supplied troops when Rome was in need. A stated tribute was not exacted although he was expected to make occasional gifts to the emperor. But he could tax the people as he wished for his own purposes and had the power of the death sentence.

**Conditions in the Roman Period.** Thus the Greek period had passed over into the Roman period, and with the iron fist of Roman rule came even heavier taxation and disregard of Jewish ideals. The worldly party, the Sadducees, held that Jews were fools who stood out against such a power. Why not get something out of it for their own advantage if they could? But the advantage was always on the side of the social aristocrats at the expense of the poor. And so it came to pass that the masses of the people regarded the Pharisees as their champions who stood by them as Jews who had rights in the world.

**Extremists.** To some impatient souls the Pharisees did not go far enough nor fast enough in maintaining their ideals. The Zealots were a band of people who could not wait with folded hands for the Messianic era to come but felt they must hasten it by the sword if necessary. They held almost anarchistic principles and started revolutionary outbreaks. Another group of men utterly disgusted with the superficiality of life in the world withdrew to the practice of the simple life in the country and spent their time in meditation. These were the Essenes.

**Life of the Majority.** But the majority of the Jewish people plodded along, accepting economic conditions as they found them, paying taxes as they must, enjoying a measure of happiness in their homes, rising in revolt when their blood was too much stirred, and becoming increasingly restless and expectant of some great crisis in human history.

**Herod's Temple.** Now that Herod was on the throne he had the shrewdness not only to make friends with Rome but to endeavor to placate the hatred of the Jews. He therefore went to work to build up their temple for them, spending great sums of money in making it as glorious as the ancient temple of Solomon. He carefully observed their law, employing only priests in the building, but at last undid all he had tried to accomplish and outrageously insulted Jewish feeling by setting up the Roman eagle over the temple gate. This was like idolatry to the Jews, and the eagle was finally pulled down in a riot just before Herod's death.

**Other Building Operations.** Herod had a genius for building operations. He started plans for palaces and the adornment of Jerusalem which were scarcely completed when the city was burned in 70 A.D. He built up the old city of Samaria as one of his resorts, and one of the ruins seen to-day is the row of columns which adorned its principal street. He wanted a harbor on the coast, and, since nature had not provided it, he built one out into the sea and called it Cæsarea in honor of the emperor. Herod worked on a great scale. He was also lavish in his gifts when the impulse seized him. At one time, when famine threatened, he melted up the royal plate for the benefit of the poor.

**His Crimes.** But his crimes were also on a large scale. It was he who ordered the "slaughter of the innocents," when he heard a rival to the throne had been born in Bethlehem, and he murdered not only his favorite wife Mariamne but two of his own sons in a family broil. Augustus said of him that he would rather be Herod's hog than his son, so cruel was he. After a reign of thirty-three years he died most wretchedly, at the age of seventy, in 4 B.C.

**Herod's Sons.** His kingdom fell to his three sons, Archelaus taking Judea and Samaria, Antipas Galilee and Perea, and Philip the region northeast of the Jordan, called Trachonitis. Archelaus, however, behaved himself in so extraordinarily cruel a manner that Augustus removed him from Jerusalem, banishing him to Spain after ten years' trial. After this a Roman governor or procurator was placed over Judea and Samaria. This is the reason that Jesus had to be tried finally in Pilate's court, although the death sentence was first rendered by the Sanhedrin according to Jewish law. Herod Antipas showed more of the ability of his father than did his brothers and ruled for forty-three years. He showed also his father's craftiness and cruelty. It was he whom Jesus called "that fox" and who beheaded John the Baptist at a roistering birthday party to please the whim of the girl who danced before him. It was he who was called in by Pilate to consult with regard to Jesus' guilt at the time of his trial. Herod Philip was a much better man and, because he ruled so beneficently, less is heard of him. His reign lasted for thirty-six years.

We now find many Greek and Roman names throughout the country. Philip's capital was called Cæsarea Philippi in honor of the emperor and himself, to distinguish it from the seaport Cæsarea. Tiberias was Herod Antipas's capital, named for the emperor Tiberius. Here archæologists have found remains of Roman baths. In those days it was a city noted for its Roman life and luxury. Decapolis was the region of ten independent Græco-Roman cities, nine of them on the east of the Jordan, opposite the province of Galilee, and one on the western side of the river.

**Jesus.** This is the period with which the gospels are especially concerned, for Jesus was born shortly before the death of Herod the Great, perhaps 5 B.C. When Christian chronology was instituted a mistake was made in estimating the date of Jesus' birth, for we know Herod died in 4 B.C. and the "slaughter of the innocents" occurred before his death. Jesus must have been born just before this. He was therefore ten years old when Archelaus was banished. The Roman governor had

not long been installed at Jerusalem when Jesus made his visit to the temple at twelve years of age. His Galilean ministry was conducted under the eyes of Herod Antipas. He was crucified in 29 A.D., while Herod Antipas and Herod Philip were both ruling and Pilate was procurator of Judea. But while Jesus' life came during the reigns of Herod's sons, it was Herod the Great who had broken the people to the Roman yoke and left the indelible stamp of Roman government upon the country. These conditions were intensified as the years of Roman rule went on. The daily life and thought of the people in Palestine was due to two forces: this Roman policy and the teachings of the rabbis who were trying to hold the Jews to their own ideals of conduct.

**Herod's Economic Policy.** During the reign of Herod the Great his marvellous executive genius was applied to the land of Palestine to make it produce as much as possible in every conceivable way. Efficiency according to Roman standards was his ambition. And Roman standards meant abundant revenue and support of the military government, much display and luxury, commercial activity in order to help meet the demands of the whole Roman world, general activity in every corner of his province, whether it was the activity of the fishermen catching fish from the Sea of Galilee to supply a Roman epicure's table, or the activity of the workmen on the quays of the newly made harbor of Cæsarea, or the activity of the priests in creating a new and splendid temple to redound to Herod's glory. The land, of course, was a precious asset, for this was a province naturally agricultural in character. It was therefore industriously cultivated. Some of it was made to produce thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some sections even a hundredfold. There were rich men who had to pull down their barns and build greater, and there were poor widows with only a mite for the contribution-box.

**The Teaching of the Rabbis.** Class distinctions were prevalent. Simon the Pharisee looked with condescension upon Jesus, the son of a carpenter, and with scorn upon the woman who was a sinner. But, notwithstanding the display of wealth

and the prevalence of poverty, manual labor was held in esteem by good Jews. The rabbis taught the people that it was worthy of any man to work in the fields or the shop, and they set the example themselves. Each one had some trade. Some were shoemakers, others were tailors or potters. The famous Hillel was a wood-cutter and Shammai a carpenter, and we find Paul a tent-maker. It was one of their teachings that "whosoever does not teach his son a trade is as if he brought him up to be a robber."

The rabbis also taught the people that life in the country was just as much to be respected and desired as life in the city. One of them said: "I am simply a being like my neighbor. He works in the field and I in the town. We both rise early to go to work; and there is no cause for the one setting himself up above the other. Do not think that the one does more than the other; for we have been taught that there is as much merit in doing that which is little as that which is great, provided the state of our hearts is right." [1]

The Talmud was the body of law which the rabbis had worked out to guide good Jews as to their duties. While some of these numerous laws seem to deal with very trivial matters, there are many designed to regulate the just treatment of one another. Men were warned not to sleep on feathers while they gave their servants straw pallets. Workmen had no real trade-unions or guilds, although we do read of such names as "Ass Drivers' Associations" and the "Fishermen's Club." They evidently believed in the "open shop," but at the same time the spirit of trade-unionism is expressed when the Talmud permits tradesmen to agree to work only two or three days in the week so that all may have employment. And the rabbinical explanation of the scriptural law not to do evil to one's neighbor was as follows: "This refers to one tradesman not interfering with the trade of another."

The advanced commercial system of the Roman Empire was prevalent here, including money-changers, bankers, and commercial interest. The rabbis thought it necessary to make

[1] The Talmud.

laws against "cornering the market," especially in times of scarcity, and against artificially raising prices. A man was regarded as cheating if he charged more than sixteen per cent profit, and the rabbis appointed inspectors of the markets to fix the current prices. Other regulations were such as these: that a wholesale merchant must clean his measures every month, a retail merchant twice a week. They must wash their weights once a week and wipe their balances whenever used. One rabbi censured the merchants for giving presents to the children to attract trade; but when ten pounds of any article was bought he must add an ounce more if a fluid or half an ounce if a solid. The pawning of articles was allowed, except wearing apparel, bedding, the plough, or any utensil necessary for cooking. A creditor was forbidden to take pledges from a widow or to sell her belongings. The fact that there was need for such strict regulations shows the tendency of the times, but it also shows the endeavor on the part of Jewish leaders to maintain so far as possible equitable relations. They sought also to encourage habits of thrift. They advised the people as an economic measure to divide their savings into three parts, investing one portion in land, another in merchandise, and the third to have by them as cash. Such care for the welfare of the masses went far beyond the prevailing Roman law of the time. The more we study the rabbinical code the more we admire its provisions.

Yet the rabbis were not very enthusiastic over the commercial tendencies of the age. The great Hillel said, "He who engages much in business cannot become a sage," and among the blessings of the next world was the fact that there was to be no commerce there.

**The Resources of the Country.** Different sections of the country varied widely in resources. The region around Jericho was especially beautiful, as was also the Coast Plain; the more barren uplands could support many flocks. Galilee was especially fertile and highly cultivated. Here were fruit-trees of all sorts, vineyards, market-gardens, and grain-fields, and the Sea of Galilee was full of fine fish, considered the choicest in the

Mediterranean markets. This lake still contains many excellent kinds, some of which are very rare. Galilee was famous in the Roman world also for its olive oil. This part of the country was dotted with small villages and here and there was a comparatively large city. It has been estimated by modern scholars that there were perhaps two hundred small towns and villages with a population averaging about one thousand inhabitants and four good-sized cities of perhaps fifty thousand population each. That is, Galilee in New Testament times contained about four hundred thousand people,[1] a much larger number than was found in Judea.

**Contrast between Galilee and Judea.** This Galilean population was especially mixed in character. Here life was indeed cosmopolitan; Roman, Greek, Jew, Syrian, Arab, and Phœnician, all were to be found in close proximity, pursuing the business of the day and jostling against one another. This region was the highway of the nations; soldiers, merchants, and priests passed through on their various journeys. Crowds could be gathered at almost a moment's notice, and in these crowds were a host of the sick and the maimed, the deaf and the blind, the withered, the palsied, and the leprous, and among them beggars not a few. Jerusalem, on the other hand, was the aristocratic fortress-capital and religious centre of the whole land. Garrisons of soldiers were here and brilliant court circles. The Sanhedrin sat here and judged cases that came under Jewish law before they were turned over to the Roman officials. The priests here waited upon the temple service. Hither came hordes of pilgrims on the annual feasts. To supply the wants of all these people there was also a considerable merchant class. Any such centre brings to it many idle people, hangers-on, beggars, social parasites. The population of Jerusalem at this time has been variously estimated at from sixty thousand to two hundred thousand. Probably the lesser number is much nearer the proper figure.

**Exports and Imports.** We know there were in Palestine dye-works, glass-furnaces, and potteries, but manufactories

[1] See Masterman, *Studies in Galilee*.

never flourished to any great extent. Probably what was made was devoted to home consumption rather than export trade. The people still for the most part preserved their agricultural interests, and their exports were such products as wheat, oil, balsam, honey, and figs. Their imports consisted of all sorts of articles: household utensils from Sidon and Babylonia, baskets from Egypt, dresses from India, veils from Arabia, sandals from Laodicea, shirts from Cilicia, table luxuries from Spain, Crete, and Greece. Their exports and imports seemed nearly to balance each other.

**Domestic Life.** Jewish homes were built usually of stone about a court; domestic animals were always present as well as children. The family slept on their flat roof in the hot weather. There was often an upper guest-chamber which could be reached by an outside stairway, and hospitality was one of the characteristics of the people. Domestic life was frequently in a bad state. Divorces seem to have been common, and according to some of the rabbinical records a man could put away his wife if she spoiled his food or if he found a woman who was better looking. The example of the Roman officials was far from elevating. Herod the Great had ten wives. Herod Antipas lived with his brother Philip's wife. The relation of Agrippa II with his own sister Bernice was a scandal even at Rome.

There were certain sanitary provisions. In some cities, like Cæsarea, for example, a system of drainage was installed. But all Oriental cities of this date in history were far from sanitary according to our modern, Occidental conceptions.

**Taxation.** The people, on the whole, were very poor. A common anxiety was to get enough to eat and wear. The taxes were so enormously heavy that the tax-collector was hated above all members of society, especially as he often got a good living for himself out of his extortionate charges. We are told that everything was taxed, the grain, the wine, the fruit; that there was a poll-tax and a tax on trades, an income tax and a tax on movable property such as cattle and slaves, a tax on homes, and extras for roads, bridges, synagogues, schools, pub-

lic baths, city walls and gates, and for the maintenance of officials. So burdensome was this Roman system of taxation that it is mentioned by Tacitus in his *Annals*. The collections of the taxes was sold to the highest bidder. He in turn would hire some one else to do the actual work, and the taxes must be large enough to cover good profits for all employed. Debtors were treated with scant mercy. Jesus gave practical advice when he said: "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer and thou be cast into prison."[1] Punishments were severe, imprisonments, scourgings, even crucifixion. One Jewish writer tells us that the slaves were yoked with the beasts at the plough.[2]

**Restlessness.** Their religious life was at low ebb; formalism was all the religion the majority of the people knew, observing the prescribed ceremonies and keeping the traditions. In some places there was such indifference even to these obligations that men had to be hired to attend the synagogue. No wonder that in the midst of such poverty, extravagance, cruelty, and formalism there was great restlessness among the people. They needed a new prophet not only to revive the spiritual fervor of the Golden Age of their history, when an Amos and an Isaiah had appeared, but to reveal a better hope than they yet had conceived. The Jewish people, with their natural independence and strong religious convictions, had been ruled for nearly a century with a harsh Roman hand. They had been compelled to pay exorbitant taxes to foreigners dwelling in their midst and bringing in a life of pleasure and immorality quite at variance with Jewish religious teachings. They had been hoping for a long time for a Deliverer who should free them from oppression and bring in the ideal kingdom of their God Yahweh. Now their picture of him took the form of one who could break the Roman yoke and establish justice in the land.

**The Crisis of the Eastern World.** There was a general restlessness in the air, and revolutions were frequently breaking out. But this restlessness and expectancy was not con-

[1] Matt. 5 : 25. [2] Philo.

fined to the Jews alone. The whole civilized world was passing through a great crisis. Roman sovereignty was systematizing and regulating civilization from the standpoint of government but not at all from the standpoint of religious faith. She had nothing to bring so far as this higher realm was concerned, and was an acknowledged borrower from Eastern sources. Moreover, as the Greek religion and the cults of the East were pouring forth their various philosophies of life, adopted by the cultured, the intellectual, and the aristocratic classes, the common man felt himself ground under the heel of these same aristocrats whose religion allowed no place for human rights and the growth and happiness of any man simply because he was made in the divine image. The democratic ideal as we to-day know it was as yet undreamed of by the Roman world. The gospel for "the other half" was an entirely unheard-of message. The times were ripe for the exponent of a new truth, an advocate of the divine right of each man as the son of the living God.

At this point Jesus appeared, declaring that he was sent to fulfil the prophet's mission, for

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

The importance of the appearance of Jesus just at this time can be appreciated only as we realize the conditions of society and of religious faith in the whole ancient world and the position Jesus' name has occupied in history since that day. It is significant that we date all our letters from the supposed year of his birth, that all our historical chronology is fitted into the two eras B.C. and A.D., making his appearance the pivotal point of history.

# CHAPTER XXIX

## THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE

**A Social Upheaval.** The Jews seemed in this first century A.D. to be living over a volcano; the eruption came in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The preceding years have been likened to the period in France before the French Revolution. But after the great social upheaval was over it was found that the fundamental principles of Israel's history—democracy, brotherly love, faith in a God of justice and love—had grown from a small tribal germ into a plant strong enough to blossom out into a universal evangel. We are now concerned with the forty years after Jesus' death that proved so unstable in all their ways and yet left us so great a contribution for human good.

**Pilate's End.** After Jesus was crucified Pilate's reputation for cruelty increased very rapidly until such serious complaints were made at Rome that he was recalled. Afterward he committed suicide, the tragic end of the life of a cruel and worldly man who cynically asked Jesus at his trial: "What is Truth?"

**Career of Agrippa I.** Within five years of the removal of Pilate another of the Herod family, Agrippa I, became king of the whole territory as his grandfather, Herod the Great, had been. He was the grandson of Herod through Mariamne's line, Mariamne being his second wife, whereas Archelaus and Antipas were by his fourth wife and Philip by his fifth. Agrippa was educated in Rome and as a student had become very intimate with young Caligula who afterward became emperor. Agrippa's uncle Philip died in 34 A.D. and for three years his territory had been handed over to the Syrian governor at Damascus. But as soon as Caligula was crowned he made a present to his friend Agrippa of his uncle Philip's realm with

the title of king. Agrippa had had a very checkered career up to this time, with all kinds of exploits, one of which landed him in prison under Tiberius. But now his good time begins and he shows the Herodian shrewdness in keeping his dish right side up. By degrees he acquired the whole of Palestine, and he brought such relief from disturbances to the Jews that his reign of comparative peace was considered the reign of a benefactor.

The way he gained his end was as follows: Herod Antipas, over in Galilee, was jealous of his nephew's title of king and his wife even more so than he. So he went to Rome to present his own claims to Caligula. But Caligula did not even allow Antipas to return, but banished him to Gaul, turning over his territory to Agrippa. This made Agrippa king of two-thirds of Palestine. How did he obtain the rest? He was himself in Rome when Caligula was murdered in 41 A.D. and used his influence to have Claudius made emperor. As a reward for this Claudius added Judea to Agrippa's territory. There had been two very short rules of Roman procurators since Pilate's time, and all the people were glad to settle down to the quiet and peace which King Agrippa now brought in. For Agrippa adopted conciliatory methods with the Jews, whose feelings for years had been so violently set on edge. He did all manner of things to please them; among these was the persecution of the small sect known as Christians. We are told in the book of Acts that "he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews he proceeded to seize Peter also." Agrippa was seized with a sudden illness and died in 44 A.D. after a three years' rule. The territory then went back to Roman procurators.

These men were a bad, oppressive lot and did the very things to provoke rather than to pacify the Jews. One of them even went so far as to insult them openly by tearing up their Torah, or law, at one of their services. Things went from bad to worse until there was a general revolutionary state of affairs and appeal had to be made to the governor of Syria. He came down to restore order, crucifying some and sending others off

to Rome. The procurator was deprived of office and a favorite of the emperor by the name of Felix put in his place.

**Conditions Under the Procurators.** But under Felix affairs grew worse yet. The Roman writer Tacitus speaks of him as a man "of all manner of cruelty and lust." Throughout these latter years of Roman rule the increased restlessness of the Jewish people had given birth to various sects and organizations which were almost anarchistic in character. One of these revolutionary parties, the Zealots, mentioned in the last chapter, were especially active now. Felix arrested and punished the Zealots right and left. Then the Sicarii, or league of the dagger, stepped forward. They were a band of men so out of patience with Roman rule that they took a vow to carry a *sica*, or dagger, under their cloaks and kill a Roman wherever they could find him. Religious fanaticism and political hatred were united to create the worst situation possible.

But after about eight years Felix was recalled by Nero and a man named Festus sent in his place. He had a better spirit toward the Jews than Felix but could not accomplish much because ill feeling had gained such headway. In the meantime the young son of Agrippa, who had failed to secure the appointment to his father's throne and who had remained many years in Rome, had returned to Palestine and secured for himself Philip's territory on the east of the Jordan besides some cities in Galilee and Perea.

**Character of Agrippa II.** This Agrippa II was a weak, immoral man. His immoralities were so glaring, even for Roman society, that they were remarked upon by the Roman author Juvenal in his *Satires*. These three rulers, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II, are referred to in the book of Acts. Paul, the great apostle of the Christian faith, the most prominent figure in the New Testament aside from Jesus himself, was imprisoned by Felix and finally sent to Rome under the rule of Festus. The procurator now had his capital at Cæsarea, and during a visit of Agrippa II, to welcome the new governor, Festus called Paul into court to review his case. It was at this time that Paul made his eloquent speech in behalf of Christi-

anity, and when he was done Agrippa said unto Paul: "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian."

**The Revolutionary Party.** Two more procurators followed Festus, so wicked and lawless that the cruelties of former governors seemed light in comparison. They treated Palestine as a province to plunder and the people as a race wholly without rights. The time had come when the Jews could stand it no longer, and the Zealots had their way, instigating the people to open rebellion. In 66 A.D. the revolutionary party stirred up the people of Jerusalem to refuse to offer sacrifice to the emperor. This had been the daily custom in the temple ever since the Roman people had erected altars to Augustus and deified his person. This act was a renewed outrage to the God of the Jews, comparable only to the sacrilege committed by Antiochus Epiphanes when he set up an altar to Zeus within the temple and Herod the Great when he placed the Roman eagle over the gate of his new temple. But after years of acceding to this Roman custom the Jews could not now refuse such homage to the emperor without its becoming an open act of disloyalty. Every one in the nation who was anxious for peace with Rome tried to persuade the fanatical Zealots of their folly. Perhaps this might have been accomplished had not the unscrupulous procurator Florus urged the Jews on to rebellion by his treacherous and childish treatment, breaking his promise and setting Roman soldiers upon them at the slightest provocation.

**The Four Years' War.** Now began a four years' war. It was characterized on the Jewish side by fanaticism and civil strife. At least three warring factions arose among themselves, dissipating their energies. But wonderful bravery was shown and the strongest kind of loyalty to their nation and their religion. On the part of the Romans the first period of the rebellion was met by tyrannical abuses and counter-irritations. Finally, conditions became so bad that the Syrian governor, Cestius Gallus, marched with an army into Palestine to interfere. But he accomplished nothing toward peace, and then the emperor Nero saw the necessity of sending one of his wisest generals to cope with the situation.

This general was none other than Vespasian, who afterward himself became emperor. Vespasian knew that Jerusalem was a stronghold exceedingly hard to take and therefore planned to reduce all the outlying country first. He began in Galilee in the spring of 67 A.D. and steadily won the surrounding territory, although some cities held out stoutly against him. He had almost reached his goal, Jerusalem, when the news of Nero's death was announced. For a whole year he waited for commands from Rome, which was thrown into great confusion by the murder of Galba, the newly chosen successor to the throne. At the end of that time the Roman army of the East proclaimed Vespasian emperor and he left Palestine for his new duties at Rome. His son Titus was to carry on the war. This was in July, 69 A.D.

**The Destruction of Jerusalem.** In the spring of 70 A.D. Titus approached Jerusalem and began a siege. It lasted from April to September. Slowly he crept from one vantage-point to another, breaking down one wall after another against the desperate resistance of the Jews. Finally the fortress of Antonia on the Temple Hill was captured and razed to the ground. Nothing was left but the temple itself. Before beginning the attack on the ramparts around it Titus sent a messenger to the Jews to see if they would not now capitulate. But they preferred death to surrender, and so even the temple itself was set on fire and nothing saved but the sacred vessels, which adorned the triumphal procession of Titus upon his return to Rome. The Arch of Titus with the golden candlestick of the temple service engraved upon it as part of the adornment still remains as a monument to this victory. The Jews from that time have been a people without a home country.

**Faith in Jesus.** When Jesus appeared in the midst of the strife and trouble, the restlessness and the insistent expectations of his world, a little circle of Jews gathered around him and believed that he was the promised Deliverer for whom they were looking. But as his work progressed and they found he was not to set up an earthly kingdom but only to establish new spiritual principles in society their faith in him almost

vanished. After his ignominious crucifixion and the wreckage of their earthly hopes their flickering faith was fed with a new kind of hope, a new spiritual conception began to dawn upon them, and a spiritual revival occurred which could not be confined to the Jewish world. For was not the Jewish world now the Roman world? And was not their own anticipation of some new, more satisfying truth but a partial indication of the need of the whole restless universe? During all the persecutions and trials which beset their path from the days of their return from captivity the Jews succeeded in accomplishing their great mission, the preservation of high religious ideals. With the fall of the temple these religious ideals no longer had one centre but were scattered over the world. With the birth of Jesus the spirit of the Old Testament prophets was revived and carried forward. With the birth of the Christian church a new era dawned for the Western world, the Christian era. All the ethical and spiritual truths that were being evolved during two thousand years of racial history were gathered up in one gospel and with tremendously effective force thrust out into the pagan life of the cosmopolitan world.

# *PART V*

# THE PLACE IN WORLD THOUGHT OF THE GREAT HEBREW PROPHETIC TEACHERS

# CHAPTER XXX

## THE MORE ENDURING MESSAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

**Moses.** As the fogs of myth and tradition begin to lift we see the figure of Moses outlined against the horizon, a man of prophetic insight as well as a statesman and lawgiver. He helped to break away from the petty, circumscribed horizon of the soothsayer and led his people to see great tribal and racial destinies. By keeping those destinies definitely before himself and the people he assisted in shaping the course of history. Moreover, he added certain elements to the conception of the kind of God the Israelites had to lead them to victory. These thoughts were of God's mercy and forgiving love, the tender way in which God broods over and cares for his people. The victory of battle was not all that was meant in God's leadership to Moses' mind, but reaches of moral victories began to spread out before him. To him Yahweh's commands were to be kept because they were right. If he caught even the glimmer of such a revelation he deserves a place among the great prophetic souls. The character of Moses has been estimated as "a truly gigantic figure; next to our Lord, perhaps, the most important personality in the history of religion."

**Samuel.** After Moses passed away and the Israelites settled down in Palestine they had need of other teachers. Samuel learned to listen for the divine voice; he learned to recognize it as the voice of a God who demanded moral conduct. His vision of the truth was of such a superior character that the people around him could not fail to recognize him as a leader. In a quiet way he gathered around him younger men who should go out like himself as itinerant teachers. Thus "the school of the prophets" was founded. This band of young men may have been suggested by similar bands in the Canaanitish

cults, and at first it possessed some of the superstitious ideas prevalent among them, but Samuel gradually educated these young prophets into a more spiritual view of their mission. And however much in later years this school became professionalized and consequently untrue to the highest ideals of prophecy, we must bear in mind that its founder, Samuel, started it upon the high ground of belief in a moral God demanding moral conduct of his people.

**Elijah.** Another century passes by, a century filled full of development, and Elijah appears. Kings and queens are now assuming special privileges at the expense of the people. Authority has brought with it privilege, not because the officials would thus be made more efficient in the service of the people, but solely for self-indulgence, because they have it in the power of their hand to seize it. The moral responsibility of kings for the welfare of their subjects weighs very lightly upon them. The independent nomadic strain in Elijah's blood rebelled against such autocratic selfishness. It seemed to him that the Hebrews were breaking the covenant they had entered into with Yahweh, their God. His stanch loyalty to the ideals of Moses could not brook such treachery. There had been a lax acquiescence to foreign ideas of royal privilege. With this there had followed an easy-going acceptance of a foreign religion, for social and religious ideals are bound together. Elijah saw the doom of the whole nation if it were not to stand for its own God and his peculiar teaching.

Elijah was a dramatic figure, and the most dramatic thing he undertook was to challenge the priests of the Baalim on Mount Carmel in order to prove who was the real God, Yahweh or Baal. The story is graphically told. The superstition of the age is clearly set forth as Elijah mocks the priests of Baal. The spectators believed firmly that Yahweh came by miraculous power to prove his reality as the day was spent and the sun was setting. But the entire significance of the story is missed unless we realize that it was on that day "that the deity who was character was vindicated as Lord against the deity who was not."

**Amos.** Another century passes by and the Golden Age of prophecy begins. The Hebrews are now in the city-life stage of development. Amos is the first of the prophets whose speeches are written out and have come down to us in part at least. These literary prophets were not members of "the school of the prophets." That order had become so professionalized that both moral character and spontaneous expression were suppressed. These great literary prophets were free-lances speaking out their convictions because they felt they must. To the stern, simple countryman Amos all the artificialities of a luxuriating society seemed a mockery of real living and the punctilious observance of religious form a travesty of true religion. To his mind the contrast between the life of the rich and of the poor brought out in strong relief the fact that the God of the Hebrews was a God of justice and that such class distinctions meant disloyalty to Yahweh. This truth stirred the soul of Amos most profoundly. He told the people that God loved the poor as well as the rich, that he had no favorites in society, and that their religion was abhorrent to God when they did not treat the poor decently. He also told them that if God had no favorites in society he had likewise no favorites among nations, and that they could not expect that God would punish other nations as they deserved for immoral conduct and excuse them for the same sins. Amos was the first man to declare boldly that because their God was a righteous God they would perish as a nation if they themselves were not righteous and that the very life of the nation depended upon her keeping society clean and wholesome and virile and avoiding the diseased conditions which injustice and oppression always bring.

**Hosea.** Close to Amos in time came Hosea. He is almost pessimistic at times over the moral conditions of society, "because there is no truth nor goodness nor knowledge of God in the land." He is distressed at the stupidity of people, that they should think that observance of religious forms could take the place of a knowledge of God. But Hosea touches a note only lightly stressed by Amos, namely, God's forgiving love.

It was a heartrending personal experience that seemed to

open his eyes to the kind of love God has for his people, a love so deep that he will forgive even to the uttermost if only men will give him a chance. It is Hosea who represents God as possessing a forgiving love that transcends mere justice and even redeems a soul and a nation far gone in immoral ways. Moses' God of mercy Hosea interprets in still more intimate and loving terms. Hosea's suffering made him sympathetic with erring men, although he still held to his high ethical ideals. And thus he adds to the picture of the true God the warm, glowing colors of a sympathetic, yearning love that welcomes the sinner the moment he turns his face toward the right and that sends healing influences to repair the damage man has wrought.

**Micah.** Just a little later than Hosea is Micah. The capital city of Samaria has succumbed to the three years' siege of the Assyrians and the Northern Kingdom is completely broken down. The prophets lay this at the door of Israel's forgetfulness of God. They maintain that if rulers and people had kept in their minds and hearts the high ideals of the true religion of Yahweh, society would never have become so honeycombed with evil and such an easy prey to the encroaching enemy. From his home Micah had a good opportunity to observe the movements of the armies up and down the old coast road. He was near enough Jerusalem to know what was happening there also. And it became his firm conviction that Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom would go the same way that Samaria and the Northern Kingdom had gone unless rulers and people mended their ways.

Moreover, Micah was in a position to see and to feel bitterly the oppression of the poor by the upper classes of society. "Pinched peasant faces peer between all his words," and he makes charges against seven different classes of oppressions. He arraigns the greedy land-grabbers and the men who have turned women out of their homes and enslaved children; he charges the rulers with being accomplices at this game of oppression; he protests against the religious teachers who are putting the people asleep with soothing syrup; he lays bare the hypocrisy of the pious laymen who give scant measure in trade

and weigh with false balances; he scores the judges who can be bribed and says that the whole body politic is in danger because it is ruled by bosses who lie awake nights to invent evil schemes. It is Micah who gave the world the great definition of true religion: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Had he done nothing more he would have been one of the world's greatest teachers.

There is contained in the book of Micah another prophecy, perhaps by a later hand, a picture of an ideal state of society. Three things are to be brought about in that hoped-for day. First, nations will settle their difficulties by international arbitration; second, there will be no more war; and, finally, the internal conditions of society will be happy and wholesome because every man will have a chance to have his own home and even "the other half" will be ministered to. All this is to come to pass when a leader appears, sympathetic with the common people, who "shall stand and shall feed his flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God." "This man shall be our peace," says the writer.

**Isaiah Was a Contemporary of Micah.** As we study carefully the sixth chapter of the book of Isaiah, which is the introduction to his long life of service, we find four definite characteristics that followed him throughout his career; he was fine-grained enough to hear God's voice; he was large enough of soul to recognize the need; he was noble enough to throw himself into that need without stopping to count the cost; and he was strong enough to remain undaunted even in the face of failure. These are four characteristics of all great prophets but have nowhere been better exemplified than in the life of Isaiah, for as he grew older he kept hearing the voice of God in messages of increasing import, he continued to see the need of his country in more and more definite ways, he responded ever anew to that need with all the powers he possessed, and he continued undaunted to the end although in the eyes of the world his cause was a failure.

His messages have held their soul-stirring qualities even to

the present day. When he called to his people, "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord," he lifted religion out of superstitious reverence to the level of a reasonable course of action. His strong, clear, searching Song of the Vineyard can be heard even to-day as he sings:

> When I looked to find grapes that are good
> Why bore it grapes that are wild? [1]

His pictures of the Ideal Ruler upon whom should rest

> A spirit of wisdom and insight,
> A spirit of counsel and might,
> A spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh,[2]

are most suggestive and inspiring.

He has been classed with Shakespeare and Dante as a world poet, striking the great universal chords of human life and human need and of divine hope. For his was a message of courage and cheer however black he painted Judah's sins. The keynote of his courageous and inspiring life is found in his words:

> Behold God is my salvation;
> I will trust and not be afraid;
> For Yahweh, even Yahweh, is my strength and my song;
> And he is become my salvation.
> Therefore with joy shall ye draw water
> Out of the wells of salvation.

**The Deuteronomist.** Mention should be made here of the writer, or writers, of that highly ethical book Deuteronomy. The Deuteronomist's great work was in embodying some of the higher prophetic ideals into a code of laws that should touch every man in the kingdom. Many prophetic standards of justice were incorporated, especially toward the poor; even humaneness to animals was enjoined. Although there is in this

[1] Isaiah 5 : 4. Cheyne's translation.
[2] Isaiah 11 : 2. Kent's translation.

book a residuum of old conceptions, as, for example, concerning slavery and women and extreme punishments, here are found prophetic gleams of a moral standard that has endured and become a part of our own. Such a law as the following attests this:

> Thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

**Jeremiah.** About this time appeared the "superb personality" of Jeremiah. The Deuteronomist and the reformers had stressed the necessity of breaking up the idea of many Yahwehs and therefore of discontinuing the local shrines and concentrating attention upon Jerusalem. This conception carried with it the thought that Jerusalem was the specially sacred city of the one and only Yahweh and therefore inviolable. The people reasoned that since the one almighty God whom they worshipped had taken up his residence there and hallowed it he could not allow it to be destroyed, for then Yahweh himself would be conquered. As a consequence there followed a superstitious worship of the temple and the city of God rather than of the character of God. This idea also intrenched the Hebrews in the thought that because they were Yahweh's chosen people they must necessarily be safe. Moreover, the reformers had insisted that every loyal citizen must respect the very letter of the law, and this degenerated into ritual observance rather than a cultivation of an ethical spirit which could alone make the law of any worth.

At this juncture Jeremiah protested and probed men's actions until he found their hearts. He has been called "the first great heretic," because he not only did not subscribe to such an interpretation of religion but deliberately set to work to break it up. He bored down through custom to motives of conduct. He even went beyond Isaiah in this, for Isaiah was too much of a practical statesman to be so thorough a theologian as Jeremiah. Isaiah seemed to hold with the rest of his countrymen that the city of Zion was too sacred to be utterly de-

stroyed. Jeremiah, on the other hand, told the people that true religion is not only a matter of the heart but that God takes up his residence there. He saw clearly not only the possibility but the probability that Jerusalem would be captured by the enemy. But what if this should happen? Would the religion of Yahweh have to perish? By no means, answered Jeremiah, for if the Hebrews even in exile carry God with them in their hearts they will be preserving the true religion.

Jeremiah's preaching was far from welcome; the priests and rulers did not like it and the people were afraid of it. They even represented it as treachery to the nation to suggest that the city might fall. They therefore persecuted Jeremiah bitterly, but through it all he became more and more sure that spiritual religion would be saved only in the remnant who kept God's law in their hearts wherever they might be. Quite similar to this is Jesus' teaching given to the woman of Samaria when she turned to him and said: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father—the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." In other words, God's abode is no particular temple but, as Paul put it later, "Ye are the temple of God."

**Habakkuk.** About the time of Jeremiah there lived another man who broke loose from the orthodoxy of his day and wrought out a religious faith of his own. Habakkuk had the burning desire to see the truth as it is and to call things by their right names. Just because his fathers had held a certain belief in God and his providential care of the chosen people was to Habakkuk's sincere mind no reason why he should hold such a belief if it did not seem to square with the facts. Habakkuk was an earnest, straightforward thinker, eager to know the truth and restless until he found it. He also had a social conscience, and as he looked out upon society conditions seemed so wrong and twisted and justice so far from being meted out that he questioned the old belief that God punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous.

He also looked beyond the immediate confines of the Hebrew people and sensed the international situation. It was at this time that Babylonia had once more asserted herself and brought Assyria under her power. The Hebrews were looking at this event with great expectation. To see their old enemy and oppressor, Assyria, brought low was to them the acme of joy and the sign of relief. But Habakkuk had the sense to know that a mere exchange of powers meant no permanent relief from oppression. The Babylonian would be just as selfish and greedy as the Assyrian had been, for "his might is his God." The spoil to the strongest was the underlying motif of all nations. So thought Habakkuk. And the old question, Does God care? sprang to his lips.

Habakkuk, however, was too deep a thinker and too sincere a man to rest upon a hasty judgment. He therefore avoided the sinks of cynicism and the bitterness that envelops many a sceptic by working his way through the maze of inconsistency and the shallow reasoning about him to a philosophy of life which would hold through all human vicissitudes. He was broad enough to look beyond the immediate confines of Judah in his estimate of national proceedings; he also looked beyond the immediate confines of the present in judging God and the workings of justice.

It was upon his watch-tower, away from the noisy turmoil of man's scheming and the clamor of their worldly desires, that he challenged the God of his fathers and waited in silence to hear God speak. The vision that he saw so clearly was that the principle of justice does work itself out if it is given time enough, that punishment does fall upon the wicked in the end, and that the righteous are rewarded in the very fact that their souls are built up and that their part is the part of real living and real appreciation of truth.

A final chapter has been added to the message of the book of Habakkuk, a poem of high order, a hymn sung later in the temple service. It most fittingly completes the thought of the prophet, proclaiming in triumphant tones the faith of a man who knows God well enough to rejoice in him although all outward signs of prosperity should be cut off.

**Ezekiel.** Ezekiel was the prophet of man's individual responsibility. Jeremiah tried to show the nation that it could not rest the blame of impending disaster upon others, not even preceding generations; that it was responsible in its own age for what might happen because of its own strength or weakness in meeting the crisis. Ezekiel extended this philosophy one step further and applied it to each person. With the captivity and breaking up of homes the old clan idea of tribal and family responsibility had to go. Over in Babylonia every man must stand upon his own feet and his success or failure was due to himself.

> The soul that sinneth it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

This was Ezekiel's teaching. He had seen too much of the weakening effect of shifting the blame of wrong conditions upon the past generation or the group as a whole. He tried to put iron into the souls of the young captives in Babylon by telling them that they had now a life of their own to live and that it was the duty of each one to make the most of his opportunities. This one great message he defined clearly, that a realization of the responsibility of the individual is as necessary for salvation as a recognition of the laws of heredity. About this time also a short code of laws was written, known as the Holiness Code, containing the law "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This seems to us, two thousand five hundred years later, the very acme of social ethics.

**The Great Prophet of the Exile.** The Great Prophet of the Exile is perhaps the most idealistic of all the prophets. His thoughts are exceedingly lofty, his language is beautifully poetic, his deep sympathy for human nature is wonderfully tender. This prophet was not nearly so practical in the ordinary sense of the term as the first Isaiah. The beautiful picture which he painted of the way back to their home, Jerusalem, and of Zion restored was a Utopia, an ideal that aroused the

Jews from the depression of the captivity but which was never realized in the perfect way the Great Prophet painted it. Its value lies in the very fact that it is a Utopian picture expressed in such exquisite language. The world needs such ideals. The book is shot through with spiritual fervor, spiritual conceptions of life, spiritual ideals. No man can long remain a materialist who feeds his soul upon the writings of this great prophet. Moreover, no man can long remain pessimistic concerning the possibilities of life and poor human nature who lives with this teacher, for courage and hope and belief in high and beautiful things for downtrodden humanity is his keynote.

He prophesied with others that his people would be released from captivity and go back to Jerusalem and build up again the city of their God. But this was not the great addition the poet-prophet made to the thought of the age. The new thought was in the way the deliverance was to come. Others pictured a Deliverer who should in time appear, strong in might and royal in appearance, able to cope with the armies of the world and grind the oppressor under his heel, releasing the captives. But the Great Prophet of the Exile felt that this was not the kind of Deliverer who would truly release the Hebrews from bondage. He believed no one could really help to break the chains that were holding down the souls of his people except one who came with the understanding sympathy gained by suffering. And so he pictured the Ideal Deliverer as a Suffering Servant, a man of humble mien rather than of royal grandeur, looked down upon and scorned by the devotees of worldly success, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," who should go about bearing others' griefs and carrying others' sorrows, wounded and bruised, oppressed and afflicted, in order that humanity might learn the great lesson of peace that lies deeper than any outward disturbance of prosperity. This Ideal Deliverer would pour his soul out unto death and be numbered with the transgressors, but he would see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Whether this picture of the Suffering Servant stood in the prophet's mind for a person or a nation may not be perfectly

clear. But the truth he glimpsed is wonderfully true. The world now knows the lesson in part at least, that it is only through the sympathy born of suffering, individual and national, that the deepest depths of the human soul are brought to light and saved from being smothered by man's selfishness and greed and the attractions of a superficial materialism. And we now know also that the depths of a nation's soul are likely to be found, not in kings' palaces but in the humble homes of the burden-bearing people.

This is a modern lesson, so very modern that the world has not yet fully caught its meaning. What a contrast, then, was this picture of the Ideal Deliverer to that favorite one in the minds of the Hebrews of a splendid, triumphant, royal personage carrying all before him with one sweep of his hand.

**Haggai and Zechariah.** After the return from the captivity the prophetic voice seemed to be choked, and never did it sound out so clearly again until Jesus came and touched the same chords once more. Politically the Hebrews were now a nonentity and religiously they were smothered with legalism. Neither of these conditions is inspiring to the prophetic genius. But there are four teachers who may, notwithstanding, take rank with the great. The first two of these are Haggai and Zechariah. A plain messenger of work was Haggai, a layman who simply saw something to be done and not only turned his own hand to the duty lying at his door but helped his neighbors also to become enthusiastic over their plain, every-day duties. The art of creating enthusiasm and getting things done is a most practical art and yet is closely akin to the prophetic genius, for people must be made to see something worth while to strive for even in their commonplace surroundings. It is also a practical demonstration of faith in the ideals of democracy, for instead of waiting for some great leader to appear, some superior and talented person who shall paint pictures that are irresistible, the people learn to trust their own eyes and to depend upon their own insight into the values of life. Instead of waiting for kings and princes to manipulate affairs until there comes a striking crisis and a call for men, the people learn to

call out their own energies because they see their own crises. And so we rank Haggai among the prophets.

Zechariah, on the other hand, was a priest and used priestly language and figures of speech in his appeal. But his message is convincing proof that even a priest need not be so bound by conventional religious observances that he loses sight of the vital spirit. He had the real prophetic genius when he saw the Lord's sentinels "sent to walk to and fro through the earth" to discover what the nations are doing.

He saw that the millennium can never be brought about on this earth by fighting brute force with brute force and hate with hate. Lower forces must be fought and subdued by the use of higher forces; a new order must displace the old; a better spirit must annihilate the bad spirit. It is a vision of light that he saw, a seven-branched golden candlestick with every branch connected by pipes to the reservoir of pure olive oil that is to illuminate the whole earth. And that light came from "anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" proclaiming the message that the new era is coming "not by an army, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts." Not yet has the world caught up with this great prophetic message that wickedness and hate and the reign of brute force are not to be done away with by fighting them with their own weapons. The new era is an era of a new spirit.

**Jonah.** At last we come to the prophet who clearly defined the message of a universal gospel. There had been prophets before who had almost caught the vision, but the fully formulated idea had not been placed definitely before the mind of the world, not even before the minds of the Hebrews, until the author of the book of Jonah came. The truth as it appeared to this prophet was simply that another race was loved by God in equal measure with themselves, and that race, too, one that had been their bitter enemy, one they had hated so intensely that they had been jubilant over the destruction that threatened its existence. They had had reason to hate this cruel Assyrian power. Nineveh, its capital, had stood in their minds for a "den of lions" "where the lion and the lioness walked"

and "the lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his caves with prey, and his dens with ravin." [1] Since the Hebrews with other surrounding nations had been the prey it was quite natural that they hated them and "clapped their hands" when the report of their disaster reached their ears. But now Jonah steps forward and opens his eyes most reluctantly to the fact that in "that great city" "there are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand," so ignorant are they, so absolutely free from responsibility for what their rulers may do, just a mass of humanity with human feelings and human possibilities like any other people. What justice is there in wiping out a city full of human souls like these, even though their rulers had seen fit to be unjust and to oppress the nation that thought it was the chosen nation of the Lord? If Yahweh is truly the God of justice, why doesn't he have regard for such people quite as much as for the Hebrews? These were the questions this writer could not put aside in his thinking. It was the appeal of humanity which must inevitably come sooner or later to the thought of the world. The author of this book makes Jonah, the hero, try to shut his ears to the message and blind his eyes to the vision. He pictures him as turning his back on the whole question, trying to forget it as if it never had arisen. But he cannot escape. His own calamities and distresses of soul made him call out to God. And if God saved him, a poor, weak human soul, nothing but a piece of humanity caught in the meshes of this world's distress, why shouldn't God save all the other specks of humanity tossed about by forces for which they are not responsible, save them just because they are human, appealing to the great higher power to whom they ignorantly but earnestly turn for help? Jonah could not answer this in any way except that there was such help from the God of justice—such a God as the Hebrews had—for every one, even the hated Ninevites. Much as he disliked to own it, the appeal of humanity could not but be stronger to an ethical God than the

[1] Nahum.

appeal of a privileged few who prided themselves upon their superior good fortune. The man who definitely expressed this message was truly a forerunner of the one who came later, saying: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

**Daniel.** We have almost reached the end of the revelation of truth vouchsafed to the Hebrew genius. But before the Old Testament canon was closed one writer appeared who, while not strictly a prophet, emphasized most impressively the one persistent characteristic which made it possible for the Hebrews as a race to bequeath to the world the heritage we have from them. This moral quality which some philosophers have exalted to the highest place in the ethical category is loyalty. From first to last the watchword of the Hebrews has been loyalty—loyalty to their race, to their God, to their family life, to their poor. Many were weaned away by the attractions offered by other races, other gods, other surroundings than their native heath.

The striking characteristic of the Hebrew race is that, notwithstanding all apostasy, there did persist throughout the centuries from early nomadic days a nucleus of people so loyal to their ideals that hardship and persecution of the severest kind that history records could not break up and dissipate the truth they had to bring to the world. That truth might have been ground to powder and thrown to the winds, so far as this race was concerned, had it not been for their persistent loyalty. And so at the very close of the Old Testament epoch, when once more the Hebrew people find themselves pressed hard on every side and many are advocating the easier road of submission and abdication, a writer throws in his words to help the brave Maccabean leaders as they try to rally loyal Jews to their banner.

To the author of the book of Daniel history is constantly repeating itself, and the one life-line which they as a race must ever cling to is faithfulness to their God. Their God is worthy of such faith; no fiery furnace nor den of lions ought to be too much for them, no king who should "speak words against the

Most High" and "wear out the saints" and "think to change the times and the law," for ultimately "the judgment shall be set . . . and the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Here is the end of the matter."

There were other teachers who held up to view some particular truth and threw upon it some special light radiating from their personalities. But these are the main world truths revealed step by step in a thousand years of prophetic utterance as recorded in the Old Testament.

# CHAPTER XXXI

## THE TWO GREAT PROPHETIC TEACHERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Jesus.** The prophetic voice had been stilled for many years. But the crushing, grinding forces of despotic rule, heavy taxation, exploitation of the masses for the sake of the ruling classes still went on. The various changes of rulers seemed to make no particular difference in the policy pursued. The world knew no better way and seemed irrevocably committed to such a régime. But in the meantime the nations were becoming more closely associated. Exchange of thought as well as of commodities was taking place under this new international situation. And underneath all thinking—political, commercial, and social—is religious thinking. It is the substratum on which all other thought rests. The religions of that day lacked the power to satisfy the hungering and thirsting souls of men. Religious restlessness had been manifest for many years; it was now becoming a disease; it had spread over the whole known world. And to the political restlessness common to all the Jews in Palestine there was added also the fever of this religious restlessness. Some were holding fanatically to the minutest obligations of an external law. Others were breaking loose from its bondage and seeking relief in indifference or reckless self-indulgence. Moreover, human needs were all the time crying out for some satisfaction, social wrongs were calling for some healing power. The Hebrews for years had persisted in the hope of a Deliverer, a Messiah who should come some day to break their bonds and set the captives free. And now feeling was becoming more strained and expectation more eager. They thought such deliverance must be coming soon, because the situation was getting so tense. It was not a surprise to the mind of a Jew to hear the Messiah proclaimed. The surprise

was in the manner of his coming. When Jesus stood up in the synagogue before his townsmen who had known him as a boy and read the words of the poet-prophet of the Exile:

> The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
> He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives
> And recovering of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,[1]

and then applied those words to himself, it was not because they did not expect the fulfilment of that prophecy that they grew angry with him, but just because they were expecting it and thought this young man whom they all knew so well was taking lightly something that to them was of tremendous import. And when at the end of his life Jesus was crucified and the flickering hope of a few disciples seemed smothered in utter darkness, it was not because of lack of expectation, for they had "hoped it was he who should redeem Israel." It was because their "eyes were holden" so that they could not see the kind of deliverance Jesus had been preaching. But when they finally saw that here was a real force which would be far superior to and more powerful than any kingdom of which they had dreamed, they gave themselves to it with such rare devotion that the cause rapidly spread and "this Way" was soon heard of throughout the Roman world. Before that world had time to realize exactly what was happening it awoke to the fact that a new religion was laying hold of its very vitals, its heart and mind.

History has been much concerned about the place in its list of world-makers to accord the founder of this new religion. The most that it has said of this humble carpenter and Jewish teacher, Jesus, is that he was no less than the very Son of God, so divine has been his message to our world of need. The least that it has said is that he was one of the greatest religious teachers, because the religion of Jesus seems to-day to contain

[1] Luke 4 : 18–19.

the most vitality and dynamic power as compared with any other known religion. Between these two statements are found all grades of belief, all sorts of interpretations concerning his life and character. Innumerable volumes have been written to support these various views; an almost unnumbered host of martyrs have been willing to die for their faith. And above and through all this there shines out the unmistakable phenomenon that here is a personality so powerful and magnetic that men in increasing numbers have clung to him as the messenger of divine light, whose teachings, if followed, would save humanity—so weak and yet so strong—from making a failure of the precious gift called Life.

What were his teachings? What is the great truth Jesus stands for? If those who love him are right his teachings are too profound and far-reaching to be compassed in a word, and each new year of study and reflection reveals new heights and depths to the truth he has planted in the hearts and minds of his disciples.

But as an historical figure standing at the end of a great racial era of productive, prophetic thought we may say he summed up the vital ethical truths that had begun to dawn upon his own race and through them upon the world. These truths are that there is but one spiritual God, a God of justice who loves the poor as well as the rich, the child, the stranger within the gates and the foreigner across the seas; who wants them all to have a chance; who loves them even beyond the limits of mere justice; who forgives even to the uttermost and heals the sick and afflicted; and since he is this kind of a God, a Father to be loved and not merely a Lord to be feared, he requires the same kind of a sense of justice in his children, the same kind of a forgiving spirit toward fellow men, the same desire for the good of all; he desires community welfare and individual salvation; he has made us of one family but with personal responsibility and he demands that for the sake of one's own salvation and the coming of this kind of a kingdom we shall be loyal to these high ideals.

But is Jesus' life and teaching nothing but a summary of Old

Testament truths? The great prophet of vision saw such a kingdom coming through the self-sacrificing life of a suffering servant, through the willing acceptance of a humble and lowly, nay even despised position, out of sympathy for a suffering world. Jesus himself has stood before the world as the embodiment of that idea. He actually did that superhuman thing of which the prophet dreamed, and thus taught the world not to fight Brute Force and Hate with their own weapons but to paralyze their mighty arms by using a higher power, the power of a Holy Spirit. If Jesus made real to the world no other truth than this his message is surely the most divine the world has known. It was the truth needed by the restless, dissatisfied first century A.D. It has seemed increasingly to be the message needed in all the later ages that have been grappling with injustice and selfish greed and the hate of which the human heart is capable. It alone seems to be a strong enough light to lighten all the world and dispel its darkness.

**Paul.** Jesus is the climax of Old Testament prophecy and the centre of New Testament faith. Yet one more prophetic soul was added before the truths that had come to fruitage on this racial tree could be given to the world. This man was Paul. Jesus was concerned with planting the germs of his gospel in the hearts of a few where the seed could find receptive soil. He planted *himself* in the hearts of his disciples, and the soil necessary for such a reception is one ploughed deep by the human needs of life and watered by the tears wrung from weary, aching, struggling lives. This soil he found in the hearts of the working people, a few fishermen who knew the weariness of daily toil, who felt the heavy pressure of the taxation which kept the government and the existing system in operation, who bore the brunt of whatever was wrong in society although ignorant of its causes, who longed for freedom of soul, who were looking for some one who could free them. Jesus planted himself so firmly in the hearts of this little group that the divine passion of a pure and holy love grew and burst forth in blossoms red. "O love that wilt not let me go" was really the song in the heart of every disciple. But Paul, a product of the schools and trained very differently from these men, saw

these red blossoms and tried to pluck them up root and all. Such revolutionary plants must be stamped out, he thought, for the sake of established religion and the established codes of good society. He did not dream that by trying to root them up he himself would find God in a much deeper way than ever before and that the same divine passion would be born in his soul. But it was so, and thereupon his trained mind began to apprehend the gospel as the fishermen had not been able to do.

How did he apprehend it? In two ways. First, mystically, for Paul was a mystic. The revelation of the new truth had come to him through a remarkable psychical experience. He ever afterward believed that it was possible for men to apprehend Jesus by psychical means regardless of bodily presence, that the real world is the spiritual world, and that Jesus was not dead but alive, able to manifest himself in spirit to the spirit of man. This the fishermen believed also, for it was their risen Lord that they preached. But while they could simply declare their conviction Paul turned it over and over in his well-trained mind until it became to him a reasonable matter, capable of explanation; and so he went out to talk about it and to try to make it clear to thinking men and women. The fishermen, with their native intuitional genius, had apprehended the matter for themselves. Paul, with his mixture of Greek and rabbinical training, apprehended it for the world.

And this meant two things to Paul. First, it meant a life of freedom; for up to this time religious living had been to him a life of irksome bondage, a life of slavery to the law, to the thought of duty and obligation; but now it meant a life of spiritual communion, of conduct based upon the motive of love rather than duty. The motive of mere duty seemed now to him hopelessly dead because so external; the life of love was the way of life because it laid hold of the very spirit of man. The second thing that it meant to Paul was a belief in immortality. Jesus had assumed this, but he was too much concerned with planting himself in the hearts of his disciples to talk much about it. Paul at first thought the kingdom of God was to be established soon on earth and the end of this present régime was to come quickly, but in his maturer years he came to the

clear conception that this life and the life after death are all one, and that the spiritual kingdom of God is a kingdom of the immortal soul begun on earth but not ended here, and that to convert the whole earth would take time. "If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable."[1]

This mystical faith of Paul was coupled with another mode of apprehending the gospel quite essential to future history. His was a cosmopolitan mind and a cosmopolitan genius. He could not think in circumscribed terms, it must be in world terms. Perhaps this was the reason why his soul kicked against the pricks of rabbinical bondage and welcomed as salvation the gospel of free grace. At any rate, it was he who made the church realize that the new gospel was not simply an adjunct to the old, a top story added to an old structure, but that it was in itself the whole thing, that it had gathered up into itself all the truth of the ages and to accept this new truth was really to accept all that was essential in the old. The fruit that the prophets had borne had all gone into a new seed of the same kind, a new plant springing up with fresh leaves and to bear its own fruit. This is why the Christian religion superseded the Jewish religion, why Christians were freed from the obligation of becoming Jews, why the new religion became a cosmopolitan faith rather than a sectarian belief. And Paul not only had the mind to think in these large terms, he had also the statesman's genius of planting his gospel at strategic points and capturing the attention of the Roman world. About two and a half centuries after Paul had died in the Roman capital the Roman Emperor Constantine made his famous edict which declared this religion to be the religion of the whole empire.

Many thoughts other than those native to the Hebrew genius have been added to Christianity as it has travelled down the centuries. But would we understand its Founder and his great message of Democracy we must listen to the prophets one by one and then hear Jesus saying: "I came not to destroy but to fulfil" and "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

[1] I Cor. 15 : 19.

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